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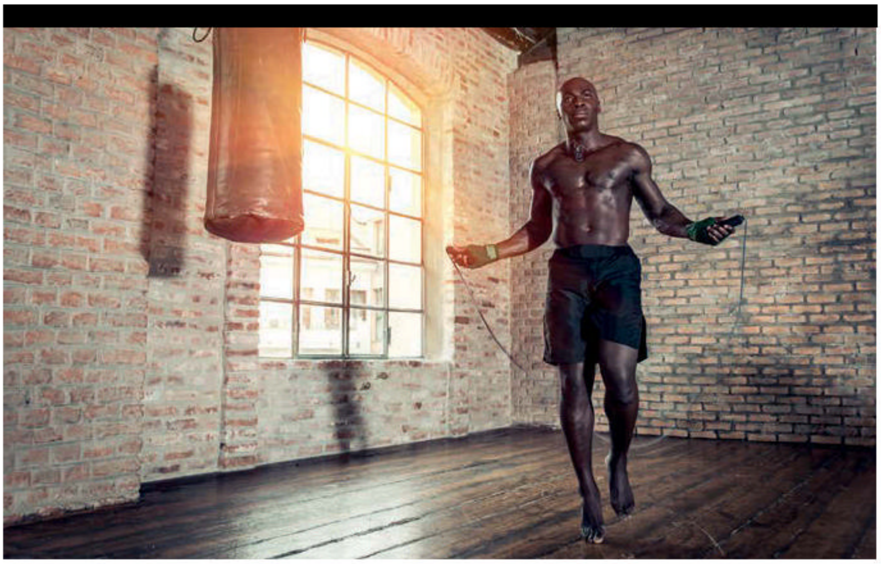
EDITOR'S LETTER

ISSUE 277
MAY 2023



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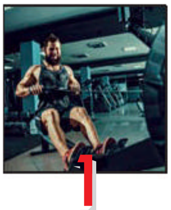
To reach your true fitness potential – in or out the gym – you need a healthy balance of strength training and cardio. If you're a runner, cyclist or swimmer, a stronger physique is going to provide you with the power and resilience to go faster and further, for longer. Equally, if lifting weights is your primary pursuit, both performance and aesthetics will be hugely improved by having a better engine.

Making cardio integral to your routine will also set you up for a longer, healthier life. Regular aerobic training strengthens your heart and blood vessels, improves your lung capacity, lowers your blood pressure and cholesterol, and reduces your risk of severe diseases.

One major off-putting factor for the cardio-shy, however, is stamina. Simply put, if you don't have a lot of it, you're not going to relish going out for a long ride or run. Which is where our lead feature, hopefully, can help: with 33 expert- and research-backed strategies for becoming an all-round stronger endurance athlete.

Isaac Williams, Editor
isaac.williams@kelsey.co.uk

INSIDE: HOW TO...



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PT Ben Carpenter debunks the myth of the 'muscle-building' rep range (p12).

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BEHAVE IN THE GYM
Avoid both injury and embarrassment with these golden rules of gym etiquette (p38).

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BUILD A BOXER'S BODY
We chat to world-renowned boxing coach Shane McGuigan (p66).

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STRETCH YOURSELF
The pre-round golf mobility routine to level up your game (p96).

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UPDATES

MIRACLE MUSCLE

Human muscle has an innate, natural ability to fight the damaging effects of inflammation – even without the additional help of good nutrition or anti-inflammatory drugs.[1] Excessive inflammation can contribute to arthritis and muscle wastage, but it seems that exercising your muscles can help to combat the problem.

"We discovered that the muscle cells were capable of taking anti-inflammatory actions all on their own," said Nenad Bursac, professor of biomedical engineering at Duke University.

Photography: Shutterstock | 1. Duke University

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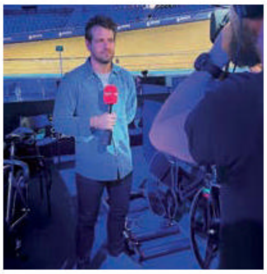
PEDAL POWER

Freewheel ambassador and Eurosport cycling presenter **Adam Blythe** offers five quick tips for accelerating your cycling fitness



1. Log more miles

A lot depends on time, but if you have a bit of it and can open your week to bike riding, there's no substitute for volume. Hours for an endurance cyclist are always key. The longer rides you can do the better, and the longer rides you will be able to do consistently without wrecking yourself. That's the main thing to build that base fitness. Once you have a solid base level, you can add on top of it.

2. Save some energy

If you're doing long rides, don't finish each one knackered and empty. If you do that, you won't get the full benefit of being able to train the next day.

3. Maximise output

If time is not on your side, you need to make the most of what you have by going out for two to three hours with a structured plan, ensuring efforts are included in your ride. Whatever it might be, five- or ten-minute efforts are key. Keep it structured.

4. Ease into training

If you're just starting out and can ride a bike, but you want to get that motor going, this is the main one. Even when I was a pro cyclist, I did 30-minute efforts at 100rpm [revolutions per minute], but no more than 150bpm [beats per minute] on my heart rate – so relatively easy. Only when I had done that session consistently for about a month would I open up the gas a little bit.

5. Group together

If you're struggling going out on your own, get involved in a group ride or go out with a friend – even if you're doing efforts – and make sure you have fun. Group rides are also effective for pushing yourself: if you go out with people who are better than you, they'll push you on.

Check out **freewheel.co.uk**

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THINK ON YOUR FEET

Your feet are your foundations. Neglect them, and you'll quickly develop problems that will lead to energy leaks further up the body...

Poor foot health can lead to a range of issues, including poor posture, muscle imbalances and even joint problems. The feet are made up of a complex network of muscles, ligaments and tendons that provide support and stability for the body. When these structures become weakened or damaged, it can lead to a loss of energy and an inability to move correctly. In turn, that leads to pain and fatigue, reducing the efficiency of your training. Keeping your feet healthy is therefore an important part of any training programme.

Stay grounded

Spending time out of your shoes is the best way to improve foot health, strength and stability. Connect your body to the earth via your feet every morning. Doing so not only gets the feet working as they should, but it also gives you the chance to inspect your feet regularly for any signs of damage. Identifying these early allows you to address any problems before they get worse. Availability is one of the most vital fundamentals of training. If you aren't available to train, you cannot grow. Ensuring your feet are in good condition allows you to be available.

If the shoe fits

The correct footwear is determined by the environment. You shouldn't be squatting in the same shoes you wear to run a marathon. The key here is investment. If you're looking to up your miles, investing in shoes that fit correctly and support the uniqueness of your feet is vital.

Additionally, you should regularly inspect your shoes for signs of wear and tear, and replace them when necessary. Wearing the right shoe for the correct distance can also help to reduce energy leaks. When you're running, your feet should be absorbing and transferring energy efficiently – the wrong arch support will compromise that.

Pull your socks up

The often-forgotten element of foot admin is the socks we wear. We always look out for the most expensive trainers, but for some reason we rarely ever consider the thing closest to our feet. Wearing the right type and size of socks is essential for optimal foot health. If they're too tight, they can restrict circulation and lead to discomfort; too loose and they won't provide any support – likely leading to other problems, such as blisters.

MEET THE EXPERT

Mike Chadwick is a former Paratrooper and physical training instructor for the Royal Army, credited with revolutionising fitness training in the British Armed Forces. Visit **coachmikechadwick.com** for more.

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FITNESS MYTH:

THERE IS A 'MUSCLE-BUILDING' REP RANGE

If your goal is to build muscle, chances are you have been told you need to train in a 'muscle-building' rep range of 8-12 reps. Performing 7 or fewer reps is for strength, and 13 or more reps is for muscular endurance.

The main problem with that? It makes it sound like venturing outside of the 8-12 rep bracket is compromising the muscle-building potential of your workout. Research, howeverm now shows that simply isn't the case.

For example, one study compared a powerlifting-type vs bodybuilding-type training programme, where the participants performed the same exercises but with either 7 sets of 3 reps (powerlifting) or 3 sets of 10 reps (bodybuilding).[1] Training with sets of 3 reps is far outside the 8-12 muscle-building rep range, but surprisingly both groups built similar amounts of muscle tissue. This shows that low rep ranges can also promote significant muscle growth.

At the other end of the spectrum, a study compared workout programmes where participants performed the same exercises, but either in the 8-12 'muscle-building' rep range or a whopping 25-35 reps per set. Once again, both groups increased their muscle mass to similar levels.[2] This shows you can build muscle with very high rep ranges as well.

Free range

As more research is published, it's becoming increasingly clear that rep ranges don't matter as much as we used to believe, and you can grow muscle mass across a very wide spectrum of ranges.[3] If your goal is to increase maximal strength (like a powerlifter), training with very heavy weights and fewer reps still makes the most sense. But if your goal is to build muscle tissue, you don't have to keep everything in a strict 8-12 rep range.

Of course, you can combine rep ranges within the same programme (like doing heavy lifts to begin with and then higher rep work at the end), or in different training cycles. Studies help shape recommendations, but we all have our own individual preferences and biology, so don't be afraid to play around and see what works best for you. Just know that you have more flexibility for muscle-building results than people used to believe.

MEET THE EXPERT

Ben Carpenter is, in his own words, a 'personal trainer, research nerd, international speaker and your trusted source of no-bullshit fitness information'. Head to **bdccarpenter.com**

> “
> As more research is published, it’s becoming increasingly clear that rep ranges don’t matter as much as we used to believe, and you can grow muscle mass across a very wide spectrum of ranges

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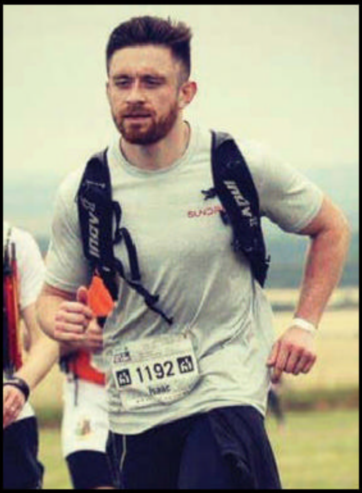

Men's Fitness *is about more than rippling muscles, or chicken and broccoli dinners. These days, we've expanded our remit slightly. Our extensive collection of workouts, strength training tips and nutrition advice will help you look the part, sure, but it's an unfortunate fact that big muscles don't equate to happiness. Which is why in the pages of our monthly issues and online at* ***mensfitness.co.uk****, you will also find the tools you need to improve all the unseen aspects of your health, too. If you're looking for celebrity training plans or quick-fix diets, you'll be better served elsewhere. However, if you want to learn how to make a healthy way of living second nature – no matter how busy you are – we've got you covered.*

Isaac Williams ***Editor***

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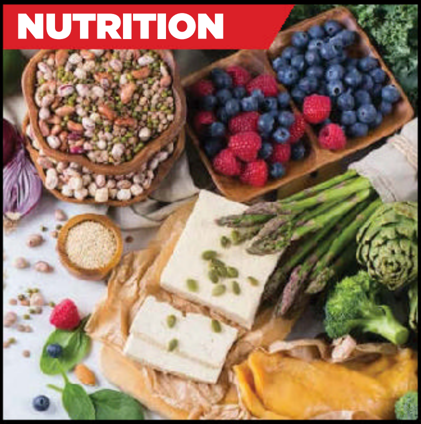

INTERVIEWS

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WEEK 5

Start with workout 13, sticking to the moves, sets, reps, tempo and rest periods detailed in the table below. Rest for at least one day then do workout 14, again sticking to the instructions here. Rest for at least a day before doing workout 15.

WORKOUT 13 CHEST + BACK

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO

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PICTURE PREVIEW

Modern golfers realise the importance of strength and conditioning, as they seek those marginal gains that can make the difference between a good round and a great one. But golf is about more than being able to drive the ball a long way. In a sport of twists, turns and rotations, good mobility is equally important. For a quickfire pre-round routine to help you tee off in top shape, flick to the back of the mag (p96).

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STRIDE
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If lack of space puts you off getting a home treadmill, folding options make a lot of sense. However, features, rigidity and stability can vary considerably. The Echelon Stride falls into this folding bracket, but quality design means the user experience isn't compromised.

The motorised auto-fold feature makes packing it away a doddle, and the two sets of transport wheels allow it to be rolled in any direction. The handlebars automatically fold down flat, which allows you to slide the treadmill under your bed or push it vertically against a wall– so you can free up space for free weights or mobility work almost instantly.

The Echelon Stride comes with a safety stop lanyard and it's equipped with an metal safety bar – underneath the belt – which Echelon claims protects objects from being pulled under. There's also a mesh cup holder on either side, plus a USB charging port.

Limitations

This might not be the treadmill for you if you like in-depth, real-time stats, though it does have a 52 x 15cm console screen that shows your basic workout metrics: distance, altitude, elapsed time, pace, and estimated calories burned. You also have the option to tap into the Echelon app, where you can access a spectrum of live and on-demand classes, but you'll need to connect to a tablet via Bluetooth for that – and pay a monthly £29.99 subscription.

The incline is quick to hit its maximum 10% gradient, but that doesn't match other popular models. And while the variety of personal trainers and live studio classes on offer adds to the experience, placing a tablet on the designated shelf covers up some of the workout stats on the control panel beneath, which can be annoying. (Using a phone will help, but that won't give you the same immersion.)

Is it worth it?

While the Stride makes some minor compromises to achieve its folding design, it still provides a quality exercise experience that's suitable for all fitness levels and running goals. Its 1.75 HP motor is surprisingly quiet, too.

The console does feel basic, but if it doesn't offer enough feedback that's where the Echelon app comes in. Paying your monthly subscription means you can look forward to the daily live runs or cross-training classes, such as the Stride Bootcamp, which splits class time between the treadmill and strength training. Or you can go for race runs, which place you on a live community leaderboard based on your effort.

Noise: ★★★★☆ **Ease of use:** ★★★★★ **Running comfort:** ★★★★☆ **Workout options:** ★★★☆☆ **OVERALL:** ★★★★☆

Words: Lucy Miller

TAKE CHARGE

With improving performance and falling prices, electric bikes are better than ever

A few years ago, e-bikes tended to fall into one of two categories. They were either hugely expensive all-mountain machines bought by middle-aged men who wanted the latest tech and weren't big fans of pedalling. Or they were adapted cargo bikes made by niche manufacturers for climate-conscious parents to ferry their offspring to school.

Fast-forward to 2023 and e-bikes have entered the mainstream. It's reported that one in 20 people now owns an e-bike, and estimates are that by 2030 as many as half of the 30-million predicted bike sales in Europe at the turn of the decade will be of the motorised variety.

E-bikes are here to stay, and big manufacturers such as Trek and Specialized have made huge strides in research and development. Batteries and motors are smaller and more powerful now than when e-bikes were in their infancy. As a consequence, frame design can be kept closer to regular bikes than the hulking great machines of ten years ago. But they've had to raise their game to compete with new, dedicated e-bike companies like Haibike.

The global e-bike market now offers a wide range of mountain bike, road and hybrid versions, to suit a variety of budgets. It's projected that sales will soar throughout 2023, meaning there will be over 300-million e-bikes in circulation.

This widespread adoption of e-bikes has happened primarily because they have become more practical and affordable. There is an ever-growing selection of dedicated road, mountain and hybrid e-bikes these days, all taking advantage of advances in motor and battery performance; as well as general technical improvements such as more powerful disc brakes, hydraulic dropper posts, more rigid through-axles and wider gear ratios.

Are they worth it?

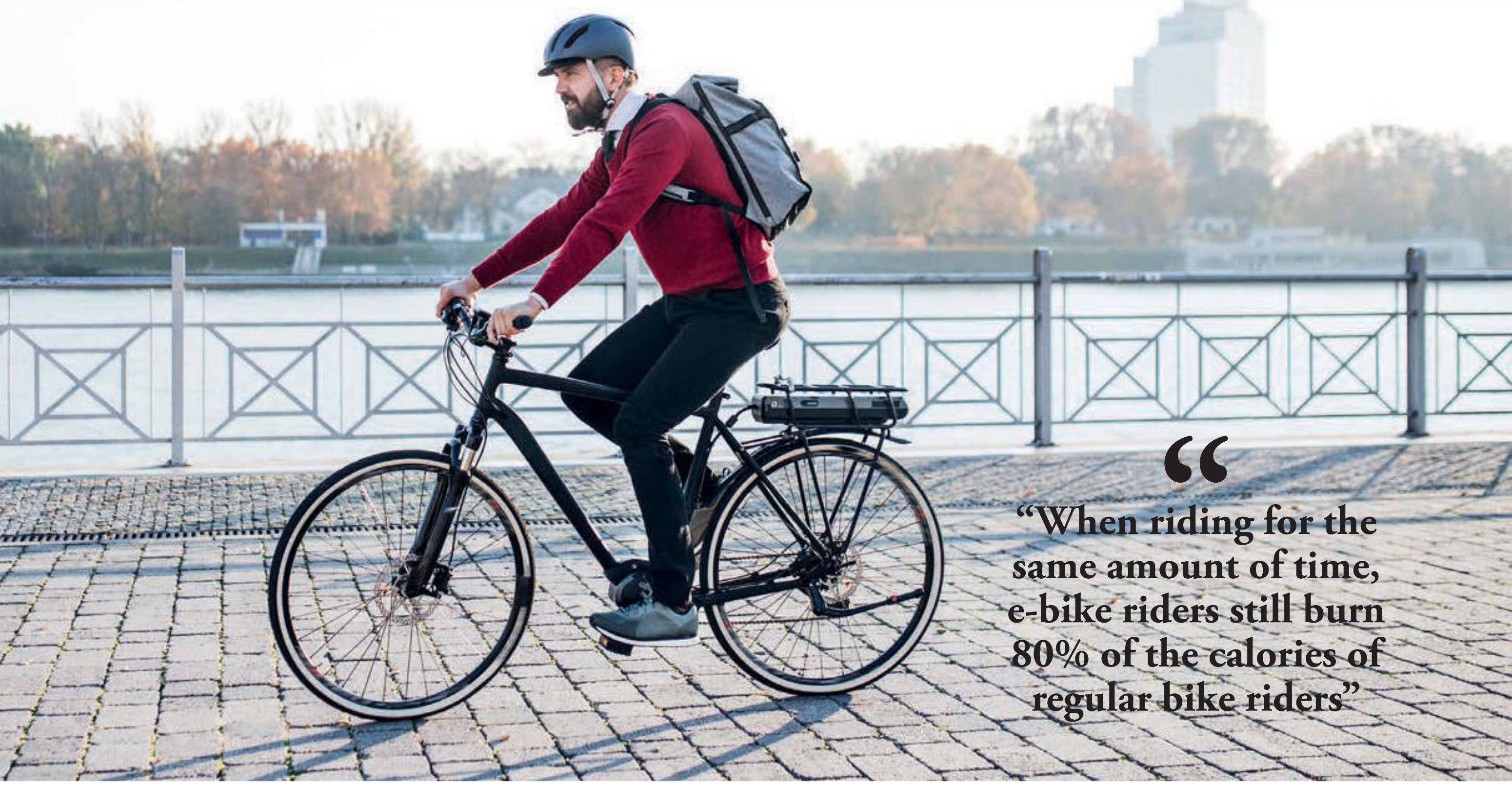
More than a quarter of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions come from the transport sector (and half of that from cars and taxis). E-bikes can help meet the growing demand for more sustainable and efficient forms of urban transportation. So by embracing the e-bike revolution, you'd be doing your bit to promote environmentally friendly transport.

Of course, regular bikes have no harmful emissions either, but more and more e-bike purchasers in cities are doing so to replace their car.

They can do so because e-bikes are faster and more efficient than regular bikes. Commuting with electric motor assistance means you'll arrive at the office quicker but less tired than you would have under your own steam. Combine that efficiency with large capacity batteries that can have a range of 60 miles (90km) or more, and it's easy to see why e-bike journeys tends to be longer than normal bikes. Basically, you can ride further and travel a lot faster than you can with a regular bike, without expending any more energy.

While not as heavily regulated as e-scooters, there's still legislation governing the use of e-bikes. For instance, to be road legal the motor must cut out at 15.5mph (25kmph) and can be no more than 250W. However, they don't need to be taxed or insured, and a rider doesn't need a license to use one.

E-bikes are more attractive options for users who have physical barriers to exercise, such as those who are older, overweight or suffer from mobility issues. They allow a rider who can't use a conventional bike, or doesn't feel confident in their own fitness, the opportunity to get out and about. It's a much more inclusive method of transport and exercise.



> “When riding for the same amount of time, e-bike riders still burn 80% of the calories of regular bike riders”

Yet there are still some prevailing, negative attitudes around their use. One of the biggest is the notion that using an e-bike is in some way cheating. But the belief that a rider won’t get the same benefits as those who use a conventional pedal cycle is untrue. When riding for the same amount of time, on average e-bike riders still burn 80% of the calories that regular bike riders would.

Can e-bikes provide a good workout?

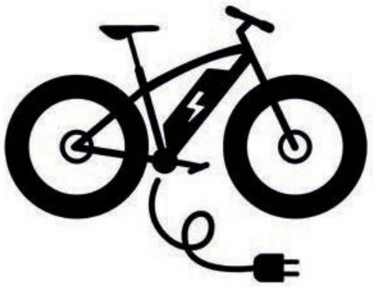
A study published in the JMIR Public Health and Surveillance Journal examined the effects, both mentally and physically, on a group of participants who were given e-bikes or conventional bikes to use. It initially found that most participants believed a conventional bike would more likely benefit their physical health than an e-bike.

However, it concluded that those on e-bikes maintained 89% of the cardiovascular benefits that users of the conventional bikes enjoyed. The study also found e-bikes meet the threshold to be considered for cardiovascular fitness and training. Over a ten-mile course, the e-bike users completed the distance on average 14 minutes 34 seconds quicker than those on conventional two-wheelers.

Of course, you have the option to dial in the amount of assistance. Turn down the assistance to minimum (many e-bikes have a low-power ‘eco’ mode) for a more intense session where you really need to push the gears, or turn it up full for an easier ride.

One of the less obvious benefits isn’t physical, though. Matthew Jackson, director of the Cadence Cycling Club’s six clubhouses in the south of England, says more e-bike riders are joining his organised social rides, and enjoying their mental health benefits:

“You stick together on a ride – some of the users will have their power up while others will have it down. For that reason, e-bikes are great levellers.”



MORE POWER TO YOU

Essentially, an e-bike is a bike with an electric motor, powered by a battery incorporated into the frame. The motor assists the user pedalling, rather than powering the bike on its own. The rider can select a number of power settings, which governs how much assistance is given. They can even turn the motor off, which turns the bike into a conventional, albeit heavier, pedal cycle. Some bikes, such as the Volt London e-bike, have torque sensors that detect when you pedal harder and give assistance accordingly.

What to look for

The key features to consider will depend entirely on what sort of riding you’ll do on your electric bike. Are you looking to go long distances on the road, commute into work, or rip up your local off-road trails?

For road riding, you should look for lightweight components, smooth-rolling tyres and vibration-dampening carbon forks. If you’re commuting, low-maintenance, robust components are a must, together with rack mounting options and a comfortable, upright riding position. And for mountain biking, a wide gear range, big-volume tyres and suspension will make for a more enjoyable experience.

However, the best e-bikes will all have certain things in common. Whichever bike you chose, it should have a powerful motor, power control options, an easy-to-use control unit, a long-lasting battery (ideally that can be disconnected from the frame to charge elsewhere) and relatively low weight.

Volt London

£2,199 / voltbikes.co.uk

The Volt London might look like a simple – albeit beautifully designed – commuter bike, but it has a few tricks up its sleeve. The first is an inbuilt torque sensor, which detects when you start to put more power through the pedals and triggers the motor to assist. It also has a key fob disabler and built-in ABUS bike lock for extra security.

Its three power settings give you a variety of assistance and allow you to eke up to 60 miles out of a single charge. It has a front porteur-style rack and mounts for a rear pannier, too, as well as a top spec sheet that includes Tektro hydraulic disc brakes, an Exa suspension seatpost, and Schwalbe puncture-resistant tyres.

Weight: ★★★★☆ **Power:** ★★★★★ **Range:** ★★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★

PROS:
- ✓ Sturdy design
- ✓ Useful torque sensor

CONS:
- ☒ No colour options
- ☒ Only one size available

BEST FOR LONG RIDES

LONDON
VOLT

Men's Fitness EDITOR'S CHOICE

Frame: 6061 aluminium
Motor: 250W
Suspension: 1.6in (40mm) seatpost
Range: up to 60 miles (90km)
Size: 19in (49.5cm)
Weight: 43lb (19.5kg)
Colour: Raw aluminium

VOLT
SCHWALBE G-ONE
ALEXRIMS

BEST FOR CARRYING CARGO

Specialized Turbo Tero X 4.0

£4,000, specialized.com

Specialized's new Turbo Tero range is supposed to be more SUV than MTB. Bit with its 'mullet' set-up of a 29in front wheel and 27.5in rear and Rockshox air suspension front and back, it's a highly capable beast on or off-road. The Turbo Operating System gives you plenty of power from its three modes, and you can expect at least 44 miles from each battery charge.

Its rear fender has rack mounts which can carry up to 20kg of cargo, the front fork can accept a rack for another 10kg, and the rear thru-axle will take a trailer, too – up to a further 70kg. That's up to 100kg cargo weight, which is more than enough for weekend camping adventures in the back of beyond.

Weight: ★★★★☆ **Power:** ★★★★⯪ **Range:** ★★★★⯪ **OVERALL:** ★★★★⯪

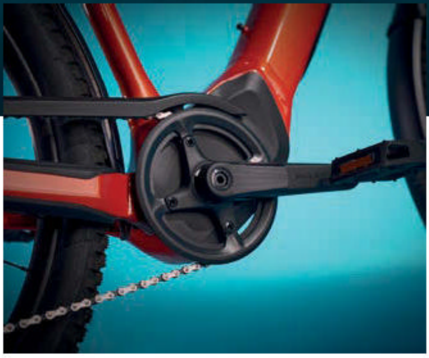
Men's Fitness ENDORSED

Frame: E5 aluminium
Motor: 250W
Suspension: Rockshox 130mm front, 120mm rear air suspension
Range: from 44 miles (70km)
Sizes: Small to XL
Weight: 58.9lb (26.7kg))
Colours: Silver Dust / Gun Metal

GROUND CONTROL

PROS:
- ✓ Good handling for a heavy bike
- ✓ Long range even on full power
- ✓ Can carry cargo up to 90kg

CONS:
- ✗ Expensive for a utility bike



BEST FOR OFF-ROAD

Haibike Trekking 4 High

£2,599 / haibike.com

Haibike's Trekking 4 is a good choice for those who like to mix up their riding. Wide tyres and a SR Suntour suspension fork help it cope with rolling off-road terrain, and its 250W motor and 9-speed drivetrain give it respectable climbing capabilities.

Its five power modes include an automatic option and give you plenty of control over the amount of motor assistance you can dial in. That helps you get up to 50 miles out of a single battery charge, making it suitable for long weekend treks. And with a rear pannier it's a useful commuter, too.

Three frame designs, five sizes and two colour options mean you're bound to find a Haibike Trekking 4 to suit you.

Weight: ★★★☆☆ **Power:** ★★★★☆ **Range:** ★★★★☆

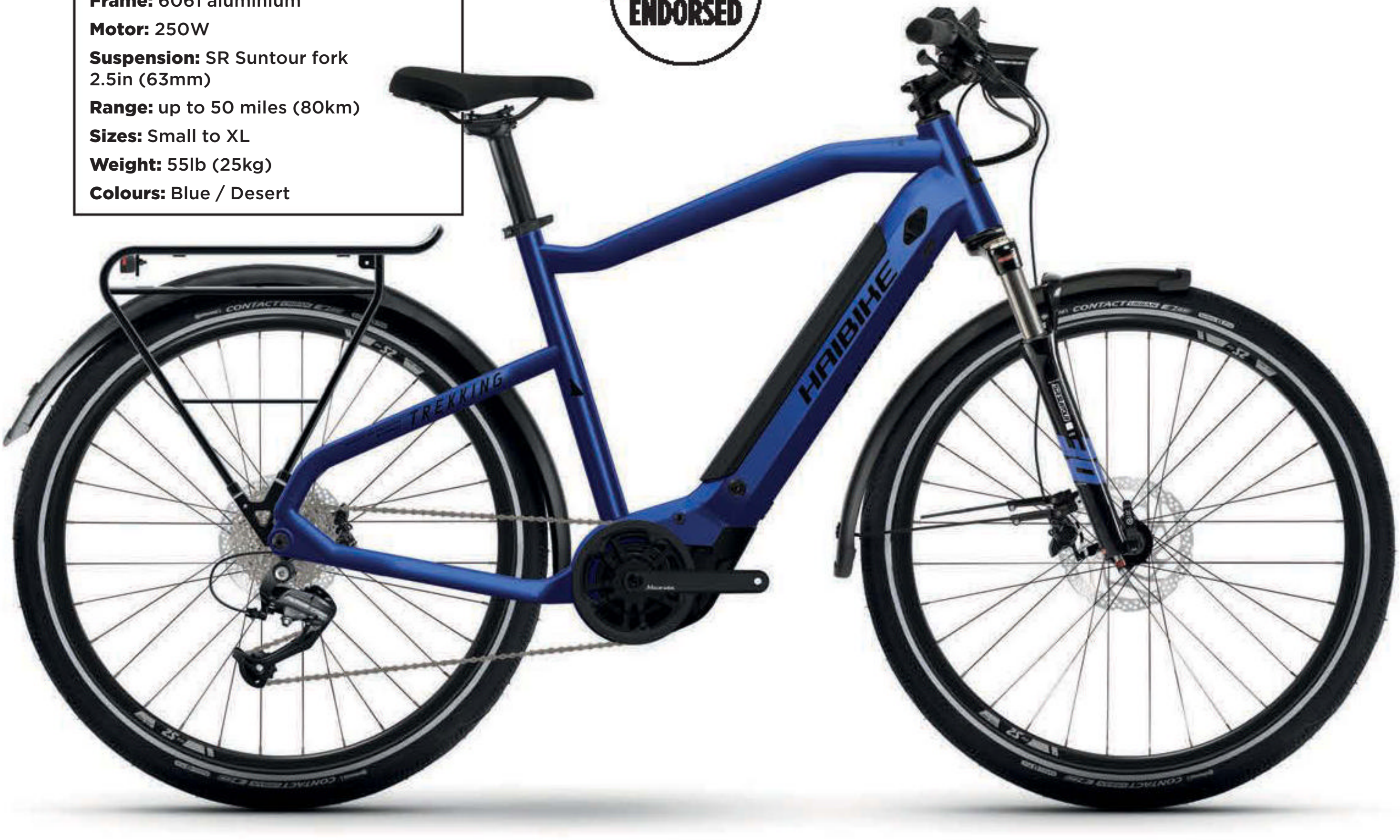
OVERALL: ★★★★☆

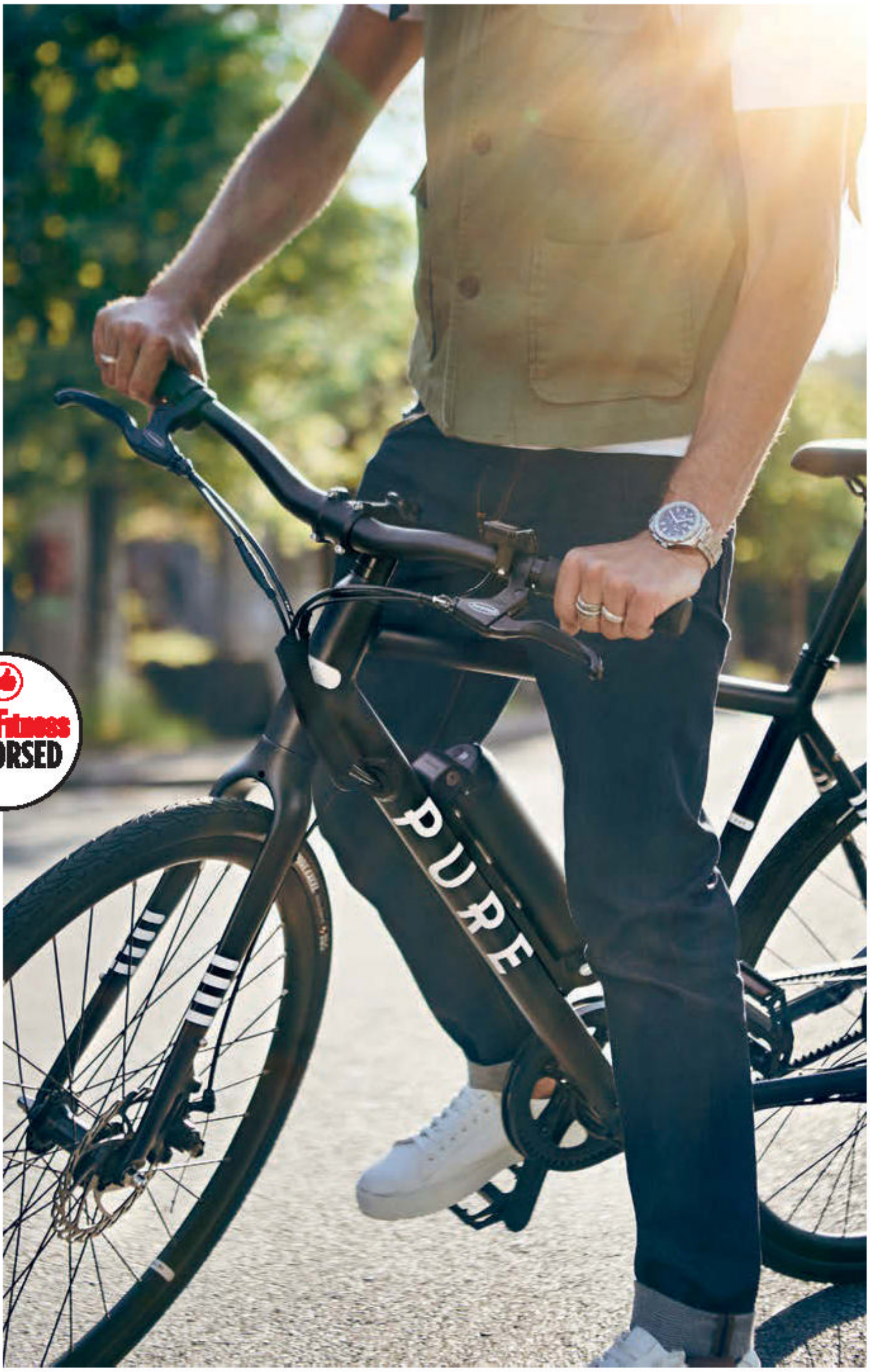
PROS:
- ✓ Different frame sizes
- ✓ Stable on uneven terrain

CONS:
- ✗ Gears change slowly
- ✗ No walk assist

Men's Fitness ENDORSED

Frame: 6061 aluminium
Motor: 250W
Suspension: SR Suntour fork 2.5in (63mm)
Range: up to 50 miles (80km)
Sizes: Small to XL
Weight: 55lb (25kg)
Colours: Blue / Desert





Men's Fitness ENDORSED

BEST FOR COMMUTING

Pure Flux One

£1,099 / pureelectric.com

The Pure Flux One is good-value option for regular city commuting. Its lightweight, no-nonsense single-speed design will get you from A to B with no fuss, and you can easily detach the battery to top it up before you head home again.

Its carbon fiber-reinforced belt drive system will last 35 times longer than a regular chain and needs next to no maintenance. Likewise, cable disc brakes are easy to adjust and offer plenty of power and control for city riding. Its 250W motor offers three power settings and reflective decals offer extra night-time visibility.

Weight: ★★★★★ **Power:** ★★⯪☆☆
Range: ★★★⯪☆ **OVERALL:** ★★★★☆

PROS:
- ✓ Excellent value
- ✓ Light weight

CONS:
- ✓ Feels underpowered
- ✓ Only one frame size

REVOLUTION
2017

Frame: 6061 aluminium
Motor: 250W
Suspension: None
Range: up to 25 miles (40km)
Size: One size (M-L equivalent)
Weight: 38.5lb (17.5kg)
Colour: Black

Words: Laurence McJannet and Ryan Hall

ENJOY THE RIDE

As the weather warms up and energy levels rise, consider a two-wheeled commute to work

As summer approaches, the desire to exercise outside increases – and what better way than commuting to work by bike?

Not only will a two-wheeled commute boost your fitness, improve your mood and save you money, it will also help to protect the environment. Indeed, a study published in the journal *Global Environmental Change* shows that swapping just one weekly car trip for a cycle commute could significantly reduce your carbon footprint – by about 0.5 tons over a year. It's good for your health, too: a recent study reported that those who ride to work have fewer sick days, and they're more punctual and productive.

Buying a bike

Getting your own two wheels doesn't have to be a huge investment, either. If you're employed, you could use the Cycle to Work Scheme to spread the cost of your bike over monthly tax-free instalments. Doing so could save you between 32 and 47% (depending on your tax bracket), which could make purchasing a bike more affordable than your daily coffee habit.

That's where Green Commute Initiative (GCI) comes in. As a Cycle to Work Scheme provider of choice, the award-winning scheme comes with no spend limits and no ownership fees, making it a fair, cost-effective scheme for all.

Power up your ride

Perhaps the biggest plus of the GCI scheme is that you can use it to make savings on an e-bike, or even an e-cargo bike – allowing you to cover more distance in less time and also make a less sweaty arrival to the office (no shower required).

For beginners, an e-bike can also build confidence, as the pedal assist helps cyclists to keep up with other riders, reducing any anxiety about holding traffic up.

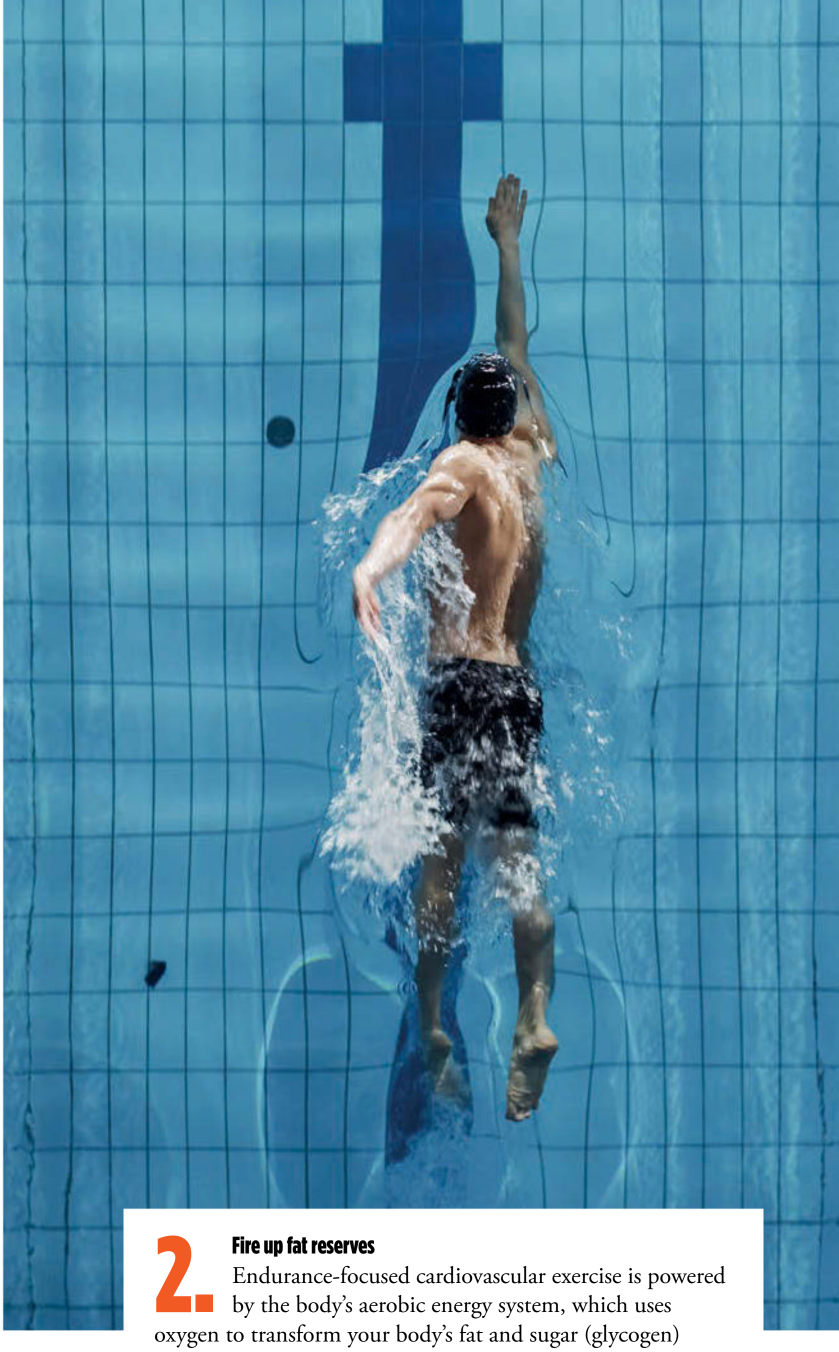
But whether you choose an e-bike, road bike, mountain bike or something in-between, one thing is clear: when more of us cycle, everyone wins.

Find out more at **greencommuteinitiative.uk**

Green Commute Initiative
CHOOSE ACTIVE TRAVEL
THIS SUMMER &
GET ON YOUR BIKE
Cycle to work & save ££££

33 ESSENTIAL ENDURANCE TIPS

Supercharge your stamina with the latest research-backed strategies



Most men who exercise regularly fall into one of two camps: muscle chasers or endurance enthusiasts. The former enjoy strength training in pursuit of a certain body type; the latter want to be as aerobically fit as possible. The reality, though, is that to reach your true fitness potential – in or out of the gym – you need a healthy balance of both.

If strength training is your primary pursuit, both performance and aesthetics will be hugely improved by having a better engine. And making aerobic fitness integral to your routine will also set you up for a longer, healthier life. With that in mind, here's your guide to becoming a stronger endurance athlete in the months ahead.

1. Be Mr Consistent

Like any other training adaptation, improving your aerobic endurance and enjoying the health benefits that come with it requires regular, sustained work. A study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* found that between 60 and 144 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise – split across two to three sessions per week – was optimal in terms of both quantity and frequency to start to see benefits.

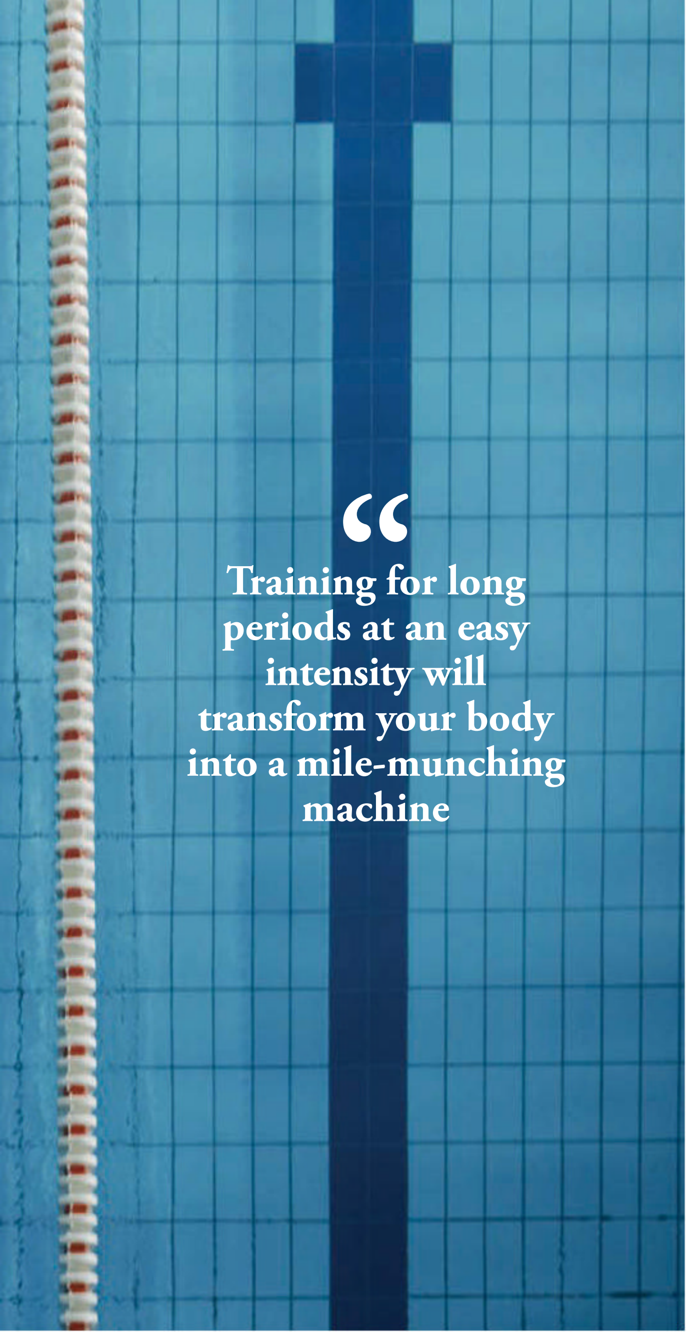
Running coach Steve Bateman sums it up as, "Use it or lose it." He says: "The absolute fundamental is regular running. Without that, you're going to provide a stimulus from a run, your body's going to make some adaptations if it's good enough, and then if you're not going to run for a bit, it'll start to lose those adaptations again."

2. Fire up fat reserves

Endurance-focused cardiovascular exercise is powered by the body's aerobic energy system, which uses oxygen to transform your body's fat and sugar (glycogen) stores into ATP. Your body has limited stores of the latter, but it's possible to train it to use the former, saving glycogen stores for when you need them most. One study found that the sweet spot for metabolising fat was around 55% of your maximum effort, meaning you don't have to flog yourself to start seeing the benefits.

3. Switch the twitch

Your muscles are made up of three types of fibre: slow oxidative (SO), fast oxidative (FO) and fast glycolytic (FG). SO responds well to slow, easy training and is slow to tire, while FG is best for sprinting. FO, meanwhile, is "kind of in the middle and can go either way, depending on the training you give them," explains Bateman. "If you go for longer runs at a lower intensity, then the middle types of fibres will actually adapt to be more like the slow type of fibre, so you've got more muscle that you can then use."



> “ Training for long periods at an easy intensity will transform your body into a mile-munching machine

4. Stay steady

Training for long periods at an easy intensity might not produce the same level of post-workout burn as a HIIT session, but keep it up for long enough and Bateman says it will transform your body into a mile-munching machine.

“Your body will adapt by increasing the size of your chest cavity and lung capacity, and your heart will increase in capacity and strength,” he says. “It’s having to pump blood at a higher rate for longer. It’s also having to make sure it can transport the oxygen, the fats and the carbs from wherever they are in your body to your muscles. Inside your muscles, you’ll promote the growth of new capillaries and new mitochondria, which are the energy-producing parts.”

5. HIIT for your heart

The above isn’t to say you should shun high-intensity work altogether. The short, hard efforts – above 10k pace for runners, or functional threshold power for cyclists – “provide a stimulus for your heart to get bigger and stronger, which means being able to transport more oxygen to working muscles and to transport it more efficiently,” says Bateman.

This is also known as improving your VO2 Max – the maximum volume of oxygen per minute that can be captured from the air and utilised by the aerobic energy system. Bateman recommends including high-intensity work from as early as the base-building phase of any training plan, beginning with short intervals and fewer repeats, before increasing both as your plan progresses.

6. Improve efficiency

One way to boost your endurance is by improving your efficiency – after all, using less effort means you can theoretically go for longer. While it’s possible to drill down into the details of your foot’s landing when running, or how your hand is entering the pool when swimming, one simple way of finding better form is to add speed into the mix.

“You want to achieve a higher intensity or faster speed, so you’re asking your brain to move your body in a different way than if you went out for lots of easy [sessions],” says Bateman.

He recommends fartlek and accelerations – where you gradually increase speed from easy to almost a sprint between two fixed points, such as lampposts – in the middle of a workout: “When you return to your regular [speed], some of what you just asked your brain to do stays with you.”

Over a long period, this starts to improve neuromuscular aspects, such as “the way that your brain transmits the nerve impulses down to your muscles, and how strong they are and in what sequence.”

7. Plump for polarised

“The common theme in all top endurance athletes is that they do a lot of training,” says Jack Hutchens, professional triathlete and coach for Scientific Triathlon. To accrue the hours without burning out through fatigue, most adopt a polarised approach. Traditionally, that has meant training either at a low intensity or high intensity, with the majority spent at the easy end, to allow the body to cope with the load. But Hutchens explains it’s important to not miss out on the middle ground:

“If you’re preparing for an endurance event, that moderate intensity is the intensity you’re going to be racing at, so you need to spend some time around that.”

He recommends keeping the volume of low-intensity work the same, but adding in some moderate work in place of high-intensity eight weeks out from an event.

8. Build resilience

While consistency might be the aim of the game, solely focusing on your chosen cardiovascular exercise can actually increase your risk of injury – denting your chances of building your endurance long-term.

“Most endurance sports have a very limited range of movement and you repeat that same limited range of movement thousands of times,” explains strength and conditioning coach Scott Pearson, from Fast Fit Strong. “You’re overworking some muscles and underworking the opposing muscles. Most injuries that occur in cardio exercise are overuse injuries that are a combination of weakness on one side of the joint and a corresponding tightness on the opposite side of the joint.”

Strength training, conversely, brings you through the full range of movement, loosening the tight areas, strengthening the weak areas and boosting things like bone mineral density. “It’s multifaceted and undoes what your cardio sessions do,” adds Pearson.

9. Power up

Getting stronger isn't just beneficial for injury prevention. Bigger muscles will increase your overall power potential, dragging your thresholds up with it. In endurance sports, such as cycling, that allows you to put out more power for the same effort, or the same power for less effort.

"Power is derived as a product of strength and speed, so if you can lift a heavy weight quickly, you are more powerful," says Pearson. He adds that strength-based training outweighs plyometric, "until you can squat with roughly double your bodyweight on your back," which is when "speed of movement becomes more important than the actual strength." Not many people are that strong, he adds, "so 99% of the time, getting stronger will also get you more powerful."

10. Get back to basics

It might be tempting to search out specific strength-based exercises to get the biggest gains, but Pearson says you'll get "the biggest bang for your buck" from five basic moves: squatting, deadlifting, pushing, pulling and bracing through your trunk. "I like to build up the reps until the people I'm working with are consistent and competent in the exercises," he adds. "Then I will slowly bring the reps back down and raise the weight up. There's no real need to overcomplicate things much more than that."

11. Vary the load

Like your cardio sessions, it's important to vary the intensity and frequency of your strength training as you build your endurance, to avoid non-functional overreaching and dangers such as chronic fatigue. Pearson recommends approaching strength training on a sliding scale that contrasts with your cardio work.

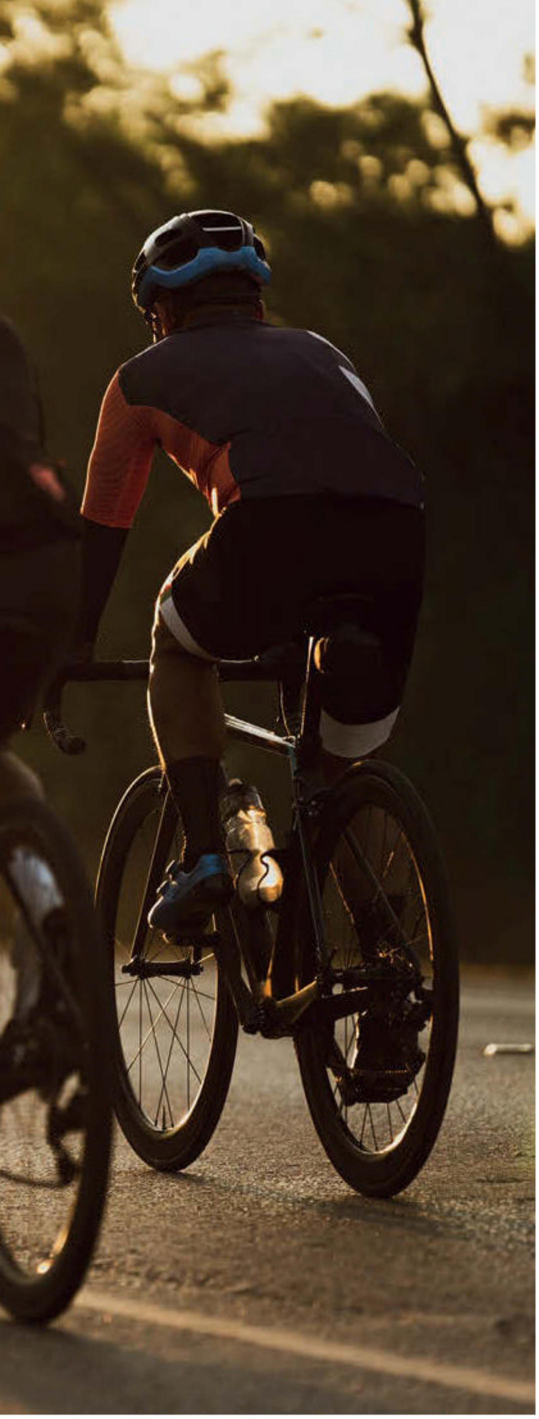
"Most sports will be summer-based," he says. "You can probably afford to cut back on your number of [cardio] sessions of those in the colder, winter months; so three or four [strength] sessions through the colder months, and one or two sessions through the warmer months."

Your risks of overdoing it will also depend on where you are in your strength training journey. "A runner who wants to start [strength] training now has massive room to be able to improve, and it's likely they will still be improving for between six to 15 months of just basic, consistent gym training," says Pearson. "Alternatively, if you have someone with one or two years of experience, the volume needed to get further improvements will be harder."

12. Put a spring in your step

Working on your form can help you use less effort for the same amount of output – it's why cyclists practise pedal drills and swimmers are constantly trying to perfect their strokes. But when an activity involves a rebound – such as when your foot hits the ground in running – it's possible to improve efficiencies in the gym, too. Plyometric exercises, such as box jumps and burpees, "train the ability to store energy in your tendons and reuse it," explains Pearson. "You will get stiffer tendons and you will be able to transfer that power through your body more efficiently. In running, for example, every time I land on the ground, kinetic energy is stored in my tendons and I can reuse that on my next foot contact, so I store and reuse the same energy over and over again.

He caveats that "for cycling and, to a larger degree, sports like swimming where there isn't any rebound, it's pointless" – and that it's not without risks: "If you're bounding, jumping and landing, and particularly if you're not used to it, then you put yourself at risk. Moving with speed is more difficult than just moving, so there's an added injury risk associated with that."



13. Stretch out

While it might not get the heart pumping like a run, a Czech study found that those who practised an hour of yoga per day had better aerobic performance than those who spent a similar amount of time doing an aerobic-focused activity. Its authors suggested that an improved breathing technique could be behind the superior baseline figures.

Even if you don't have a spare seven hours each week to refine your downward dog, research suggests that just two 50-minute sessions per week can improve your lung capacity.

14. Remember to rest

As your body starts to make positive adaptations, it can be tempting to push yourself to train more frequently. But exercising more doesn't always equal more improvements.

"If you train every day, you're not giving your body the space to make the adaptations," says Bateman. He recommends a minimum of two rest days a week and believes simply getting them is more important than their timing. "One of the questions I ask when taking on a new runner is, 'What days are you already fully committed and absolutely can't do any training?' We nominate those as rest days."

15. Maximise recovery weeks

To really amp up results, recovery shouldn't be limited to those two rest days per week. Most long-term training plans will include a two- or three-week build phase, followed by a lower-intensity week that helps to really hammer home the adaptations. But it doesn't have to feel like wasted time.

"I do testing to see if [clients'] fitness has improved," says Bateman. "Typically, they're much shorter runs; they are high intensity, but they're much lower volume, so your body does get a rest during that week. You're still training, because testing is training, but you're also getting a read on whether fitness is improving."

16. Sleep more

Sleeping is crucial for rest, recovery and getting your body ready for the following day's training session. While it's recommended that adults get between seven and nine hours of shut-eye each night, a recent study found that the optimum amount for athletes was 8.3 hours. If you're struggling to get that every night, it might be time to reassess your bedtime. The researchers found that participants had the best chance of getting enough sleep when hitting the hay between 10pm and 10:30pm.

17. Load up

Hit a wall with your progress and want to keep growing your endurance? Training consistently is only half of the battle. "If that stimulus never changes through progression, your body won't keep adapting," says Bateman. He adds that a good training plan will be based around progressive overload: "matching the level of stimulus to your body's ability to handle it (progressive), and adding just a little bit more (overload) to continue causing adaptations."

18. Amp up the accuracy

Noticing your endurance's improvement is difficult to do from feeling alone? Luckily, there's a wealth of tools built into even the most basic smartwatches, which can help provide some hard evidence.

"[Data] allows you to quantify what you're doing," says Hutchens, "so you can measure your progress in a more objective way." He adds that it can also be key on a day-to-day basis for keeping your training intensity in check. "Having paces or heart rate allows you to keep a cap on where you're at and make sure you get the prescribed training intensity rather than above that. If you're going too hard in each session, your body simply can't recover."

> "Researchers found that participants had the best chance of getting enough sleep when hitting the hay between 10pm and 10.30pm

19. Remember who’s in charge

It’s important not to become a slave to the data in pursuit of endurance gains. Hutchens recommends that it should be used to influence rather than guide daily training.

“I give power numbers, pace numbers and heart rate numbers, but there is always also a rate of perceived exertion,” he says. Generally ranked on a scale of 0-10, zero would be relaxing, while 10 would be an all-out sprint you can only sustain for seconds. “I encourage all athletes to use that and listen to their body first. The data is there to guide you – don’t get too hung up on it.”

20. Form a routine

Training consistently might seem like a simple way of building endurance, but the reality can easily become much more difficult when you throw work, life and other commitments into the mix. The solution? Remove the choice. “You need to incorporate your training within your daily routine, just the same as you get up and go to work,” says Hutchens. “Motivation is limited and is for the occasions when things are against you – like when you’ve had to work late or the weather’s really bad.”

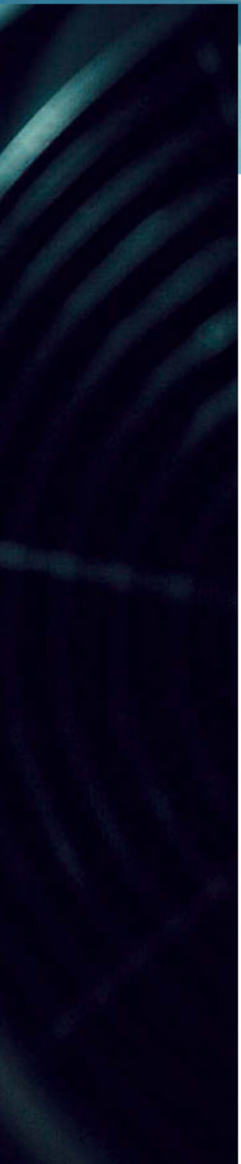
21. Go for goal

Struggling with motivation? Nothing adds a purpose to training like signing up for an event.

“If you don’t have an end goal or an event to work towards, when you get up for that early morning session it’s easy to think, *Why am I even doing this?*” says Hutchens. It’s not just applying a ‘stick’ approach to training, either, with the event at the end a carrot to look forward to. “You can meet like-minded people,” he adds, “and that could maybe springboard onto other things, which allows you to get more out of yourself in the long-term.”

22. Get competitive

Looking to increase your training volume? It’s time to get social. A paper published in *Nature Communications* found that simply seeing that a peer had run further or faster inspired someone to push themselves that little bit extra on that day’s run. Apps such as Strava are an effective way to see what your friends are up to with their fitness, and opening it before each workout could be all that’s needed to poke your competitive side.



23. Master the macro

A solid training plan will only get you so far. To really ramp up your aerobic abilities, you need to nail your nutrition.

"With macronutrients, I always suggest that people look at their protein and their fat first, ensuring that they're adequate, with a periodised approach to carbohydrate – or fuelling for the work required," says Dr Richard Allison, consultant in performance nutrition and clinical dietetics for the Institute of Sport, Exercise and Health. He recommends between 1.8g and 2g protein per kg of bodyweight, 1g and 1.1g fat per kg of bodyweight, and a minimum of between 100g and 110g carbohydrate per day – adding more if you're active.

24. Think fast

It might sound counterintuitive, but exercising on an empty stomach may help improve your aerobic capacity. "If you include fasted training once a week, you get a cellular adaptation that increases both your aerobic capacity and your ability to recover from a muscle protein synthesis perspective," says Allison. He explains that there is a master cell regulator – PGC-1alpha – that increases its responses when you conduct fasted training followed by a meal containing carbohydrates and protein.

25. Crack carb loading

Although not necessary for short sessions, what you eat before longer training days or events can have a transformative effect on your performance. Carb loading has been shown to delay fatigue and improve performance by 2-3% during endurance exercise longer than 90 minutes, and it's recommended to consume 10-12 g of carbohydrate per kg of bodyweight per day up to 48 hours before a big day. But it's possible to refine things further in the hours before starting, too.

"If you've got at least three hours before the event, you want to be having a low-fibre, low-fat, high-carbohydrate meal," says Allison. "The reason for the low-fibre and low-fat is that they can delay gastric emptying. The hour before you start training, you want to include some more simple carbohydrates, which can be in the form of sports foods, supplements such as gels or sports drinks, or fruits such as a banana – that will give you some additional carbohydrate to allow you to perform better."

> "Struggling with motivation? Nothing adds a purpose to training like signing up for an event

> “The aerobic energy system doesn’t just rely on the body’s carbohydrate stores. Fat is a key energy source, too

Words: Charlie Allenby | Photography: Shutterstock

26. Top up the tank

Even if you've optimally carb loaded, if you're doing a longer event you're going to use up those glycogen stores at some point. Often referred to as 'hitting the wall', this is where your body has used up all your stored carbohydrates and starts the less-efficient process of converting proteins and fats into energy. Fortunately, it's possible to prevent or delay this from happening, though, by consuming carbs on the go.

"The rule of thumb is that you typically don't need intra-workout carbs until about 60 minutes in," explains Allison. During sessions over an hour, he recommends starting at 1g of carbohydrate per minute (60g per hour), which can come from a sports drink or a gel for ease of ingestion while active. "The exogenous carbohydrate – stuff you're taking during your workout – actually has a glycogen-sparing effect and you use that as fuel to produce energy, helping you save your stores for longer."

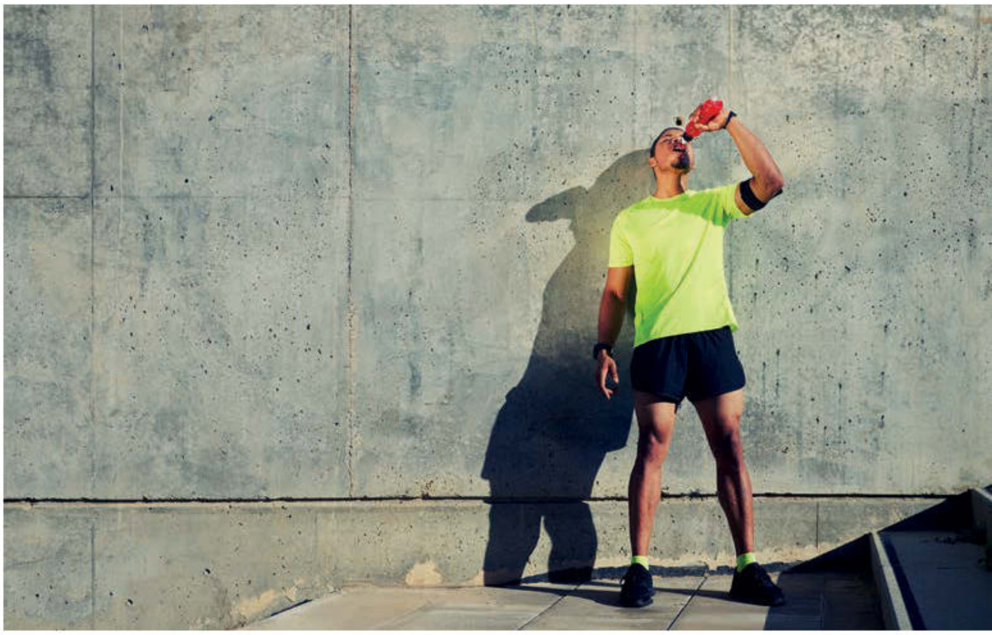
27. Don't forgo fats

The aerobic energy system doesn't just rely on the body's carbohydrate stores. Fat is a key energy source, too, and intramuscular triglycerides (fat stored in muscle fibres) can be converted into energy when combined with oxygen.

"Yes, carbohydrate is king, but in those aerobic activities, you're also oxidising fat," says Allison. While all fats contain 9kcals of energy per gram, there are healthy varieties – mono and polyunsaturated, such as avocados, nuts and oily fish – that can be more beneficial for cardiovascular health. "Bad fats can obviously have negative consequences to health," says Allison, "and these tend to come from overly processed foods and seed oils."

28. Drink up

Dehydration is a surefire way to hamper a workout – particularly as sessions start to tip beyond the hour mark. To delay fatigue through lack of fluids, it's recommended to drink at regular intervals of every ten to 20 minutes, and to consume between 600ml and 1,200ml of liquid an hour. If the intensity is on the high side, it's worth adding some carbohydrates into the mix, while sodium (which is present in electrolytes) might help with fluid retention on hot days.



29. But don't overdo it

It is possible to have too much of a good thing, and overhydration can lead to a condition called exercise-associated hyponatremia – where the sodium levels in the blood become too diluted, which can ultimately be fatal. Guidelines suggest that the best way to prevent taking on too much fluid is to drink to thirst, rather than constantly taking on water or sports drinks, with it better to be a little bit dehydrated than oversaturated.

30. Give your aerobic capacity a shot

Looking to give your training a boost? A pre-workout cup of Joe could be the answer. "Caffeine can help with uprating heart rates and actually increases your aerobic capacity of the exercising muscle," says Allison. He suggests 3-5mg of caffeine per kg of bodyweight about 30 minutes before starting exercise to feel the benefit, which translates roughly to a triple shot espresso for someone who's 70kg.

31. Prioritise protein

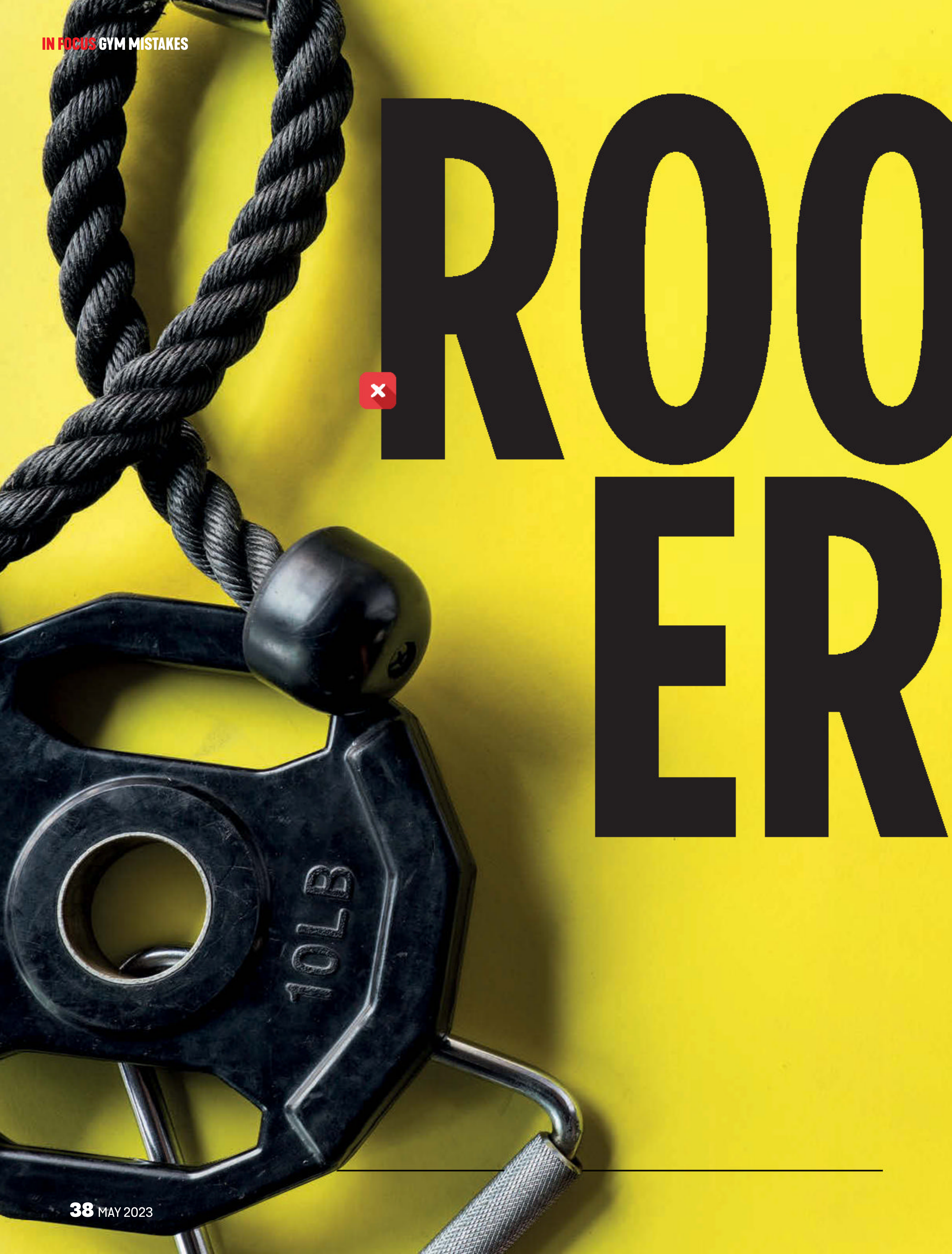
"When people think 'endurance', they're not necessarily thinking about muscle mass, but dietary protein is really important for recovery," explains Allison. The priority should be getting the correct amount of protein, which is closely followed by its quality and the amount of branch-chain amino acids (BCAAs), with timing the least important factor to consider. "The thing that can maximise your recovery and muscle protein synthesis is dividing up the protein and having it every two-and-a-half to three waking hours," adds Allison.

32. Use essential oils

Suffer from delayed-onset muscle soreness (DOMS) after a long or hard session? It's time to ramp up the omega-3. "The mechanism is unclear, but it's been shown to reduce muscle soreness," says Allison. He recommends a high dose of approximately 1g per 10kg of bodyweight. For reference, a 90g mackerel fillet contains 4.9g of omega-3, making it easier to achieve than you might think.

33. Stock up on supplements

On top of getting your ratio of macronutrients right, Allison suggests that other aerobic-enhancing nutritional improvements can be sourced quite easily through supplements. Beta-alanine "reduces the build-up of lactic acid in the muscle, so you can exercise or compete for longer." A small, 2g daily dose of creatine "increases the muscles' ability to produce energy", while nitric oxide – which can be found in beetroot juice – "helps the exercising muscle to be more efficient with oxygen". He stresses sourcing supplements from a reputable company and ensuring that they've been Informed Sport batch tested, to minimise the risk of contaminants that could cause a failed drugs test. ●



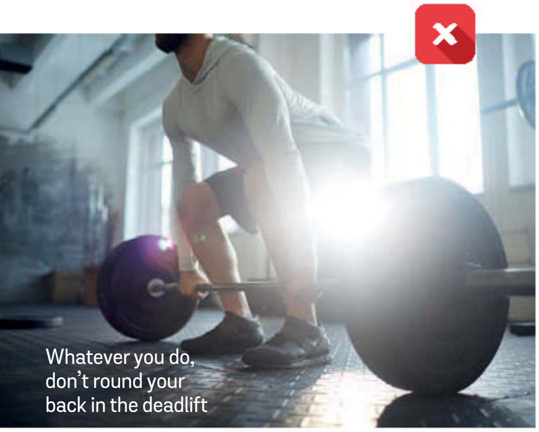
ROO ER

OKIE RORS

Maximise time in the gym – and progress away from it – by steering well clear of these common mistakes

You're always reminded what you should be doing in the gym... but what about the things you shouldn't? Along with good form and some basic common sense, there are also some unwritten codes of conduct every man should be aware of.

Two personal trainers – Matt Morsia of @mattdoesfitness fame, and Liam Cavanagh (@liamcavanaghfitness) – are here to save your blushes…



Whatever you do, don't round your back in the deadlift

1 Stop risking your spine

Although there are many body benefits to be reaped from deadlifts, this is one exercise that is oh-so easy to get wrong.

"Deadlifting with a rounded lower back is both common and dangerous," says Morsia. "If you're looking for a great way to destroy your spin, this is it – especially when under a heavy load. If you can't deadlift with a neutral, flat lower back, the weight is simply too heavy."

Another common deadlift issue is the hips shooting up.

"If you look side-on at a deadlift, your hips and chest should be rising up in tandem," Morsia adds. "Often, people will load the bar up, get down into their set-up, and when they start trying to lift the weight their hips shoot up first, then their chest catches up."

As before, if the weight is too heavy, drop it until you've nailed your form.

2 Don't hog the weights

There are some unwritten rules when it comes to how much equipment is acceptable to be using at any one time – particularly in busy, commercial gyms.

"I'm sure some gyms have specific rules," says Morsia, "but the general one is simple: don't be selfish. If you're using four sets of dumbbells simultaneously, that's not very socially acceptable."

Particularly at peak times – before and after work – it's important to tailor your workouts accordingly. Do you really need to be doing that triple drop set with dumbbells, for instance?

3 Stop lurking

Waiting for equipment to free up? The worst thing you can do is creep around people who are working out. Ask how long they have left, by all means, but don't then stare them down until they're finished.

"Worst-case scenario," says Morsia, "is you're waiting seven minutes, max. Wiggle your workout around while you wait."

4 Don't text between sets

Airplane
Mode

"A structured workout is a good workout," says online coach Liam Cavanagh. Therefore, knowing how much rest time you're taking between sets, and actually sticking to that number, is crucial for an effective training session. "We all know how easy it is to get lost in your phone once you're on WhatsApp, Instagram or TikTok," Cavanagh continues. "If you're not timing your rests, or you have the tendency to get lost in your phone, then I'd advise steering clear."

Use iPhones' new 'Fitness Focus' mode, or simply put your phone on airplane mode while in the gym.

5 Stop relying on memory

You don't need something else to cram into your memory bank. Writing down your workouts, reps and weights helps you to keep track of progression.

Similarly, if you've had to make a last-minute change to your session, record it in your workout notes. "If you're tracking your bench press and that is normally your first movement in your workout," adds Morsia, "it will be detrimental to your performance to have to do it later on in your session. When you look back and think, *Why was my bench press so bad on that day?* you'll know why."

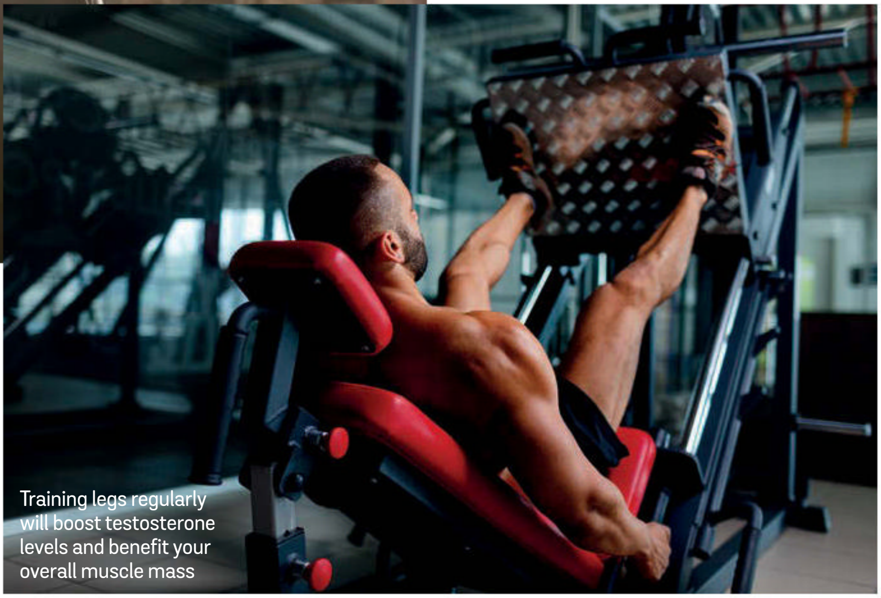
> "With any exercise, think about the muscle you're trying to work on

6 Don't cheat

Training the upper body requires stability. "With any exercise, think about the muscle you're trying to work on and think about the function of that muscle," says Morsia. "With bicep curls, for example, you're targeting the muscle that flexes your elbow, so this is the movement you need to focus on."

Continuing the bicep curl analogy,

At peak times, avoid hoarding too much equipment



Training legs regularly will boost testosterone levels and benefit your overall muscle mass

when people attempt to lift heavier, they often cheat by swinging their upper arm to get momentum. "When you do that," Morsia adds, "all you're doing is negating some of the elbow flexion and therefore getting less bicep engagement. Keep your upper arm fixed, and focus on contracting your biceps and bending your elbow."

7 Stop doing cardio first

"If you have aspirations of getting stronger," says Cavanagh, "make sure you leave your cardio until the end of your session. There's no point tiring yourself out with a stint on the cross-trainer before pushing yourself in the weights room."

8 Don't shrug your shoulders

Working your shoulders? A lateral raise – whether with dumbbells, cables or a machine – is a highly effective exercise, but the key is to keep your shoulders fixed.

"I very often see people turn these into shrugs," says Morsia, "again [as with bicep curls] because they're trying to lift weights that are too heavy. If you shrug, you hit your traps more. Don't shrug, keep your shoulders nice and fixed, and remember it is OK to lower your weight."

9 Stop skipping leg day

"Assuming you're trying to build muscle, you want to split your volume equally," says Morsia. "Some guys will do four upper-body workouts and one leg workout, but that volume split will make you top-heavy. On a basic level, a good training split is: push, pull, legs, rest. You could stick to that or, if you have time, do it twice over for a nice six-day split – with a good, even distribution over your body, hitting every muscle group."

10 Don't seek out soreness

"People have a perception of training that you should be sweating, out of breath and your body should ache afterwards," says Morsia. "Actually, that is very far from the truth."

Unless you're just starting out, or coming back from a break, you shouldn't feel sore all the time. "I rarely get any soreness now," he adds, "as my body is used to it. It should not be your gauge of whether your session has been effective or not. An effective session is whether you have gone up a weight or reps."

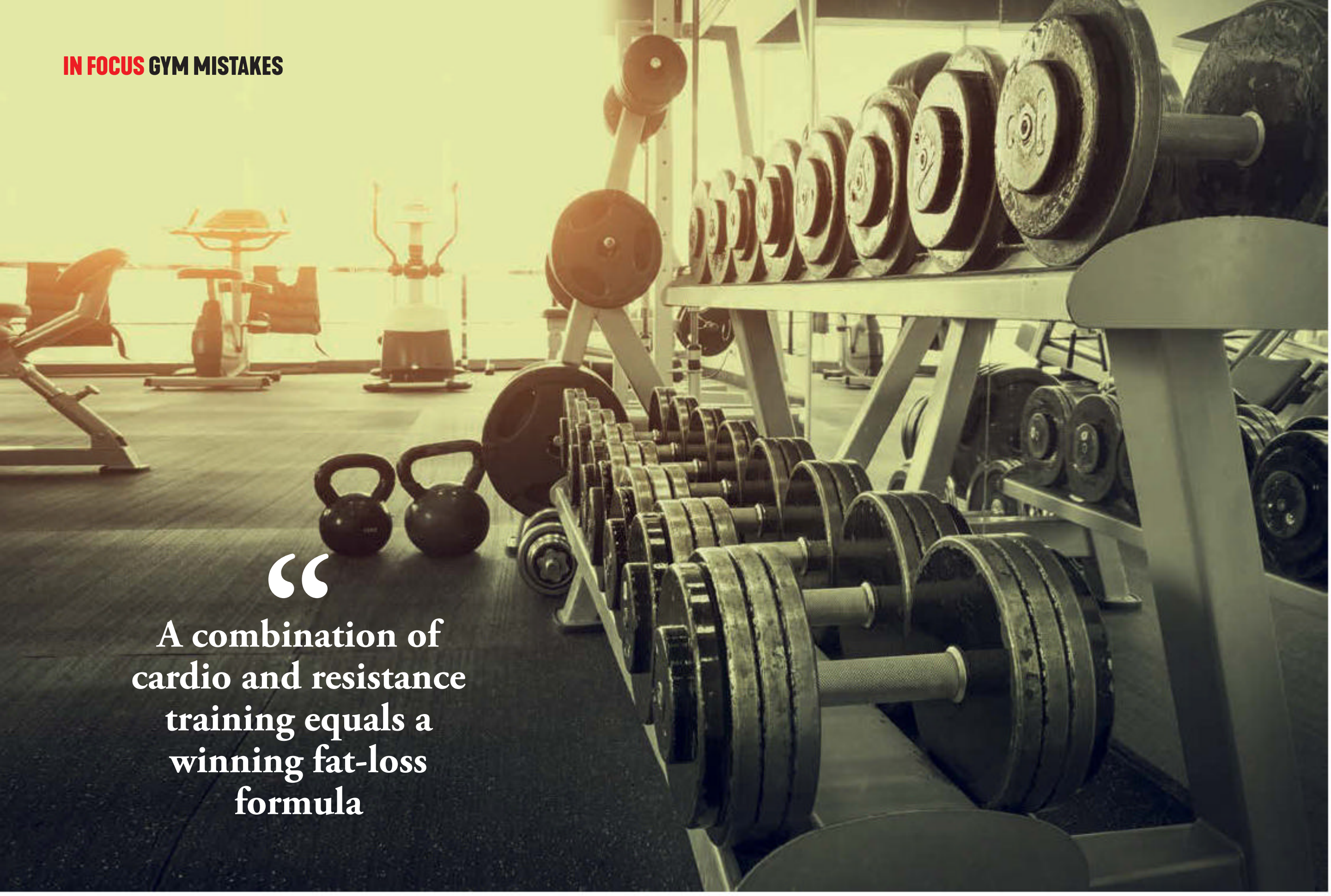
11 Stop slamming weights

"There's just no need," says Cavanagh. "The exercise isn't finished until you have put your weights down. So, if you can't do that without having to slam the weights excessively, it's highly unlikely that you will be performing the set with full range of motion and correct form. It's also annoying for everyone else in the gym, and can even be intimidating to those who are less confident."

12 Don't do the same old thing

If you want your body to grow, adapt, get bigger and stronger, you have to make your training harder each week. This is where progressive overload is key.

"You can reduce recovery, increase the number of reps or sets – whatever it is, do something that is going to make your training harder," advises Morsia. "If you don't, you won't see progress and will eventually regress over time."

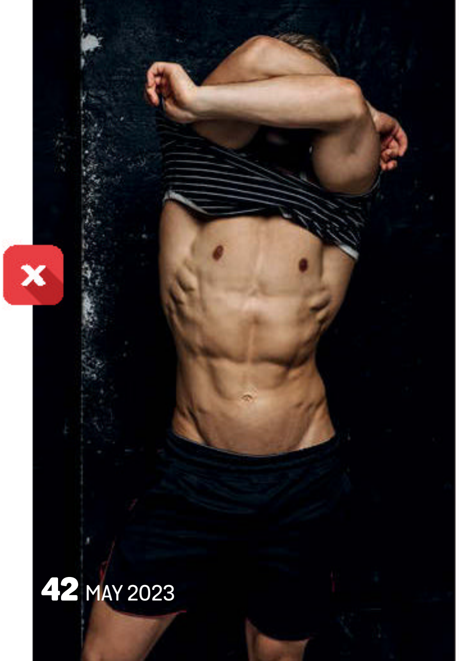


> A combination of cardio and resistance training equals a winning fat-loss formula

Words: Lucy Gornall | Photography: Shutterstock

13 Stop with the strip tease

"It's a gym, not a beach, so keep your kit on," pleads Cavanagh. "If you're in a proper bodybuilding gym – think Gold's Gym in California – then fair enough. Everyone knows why you're there; you want to get a nasty pump on and admire it in all its glory as soon as the set is finished. But if you're in a commercial gym, whipping your top and joggers off in the weights section, then your ego has got the better of you."



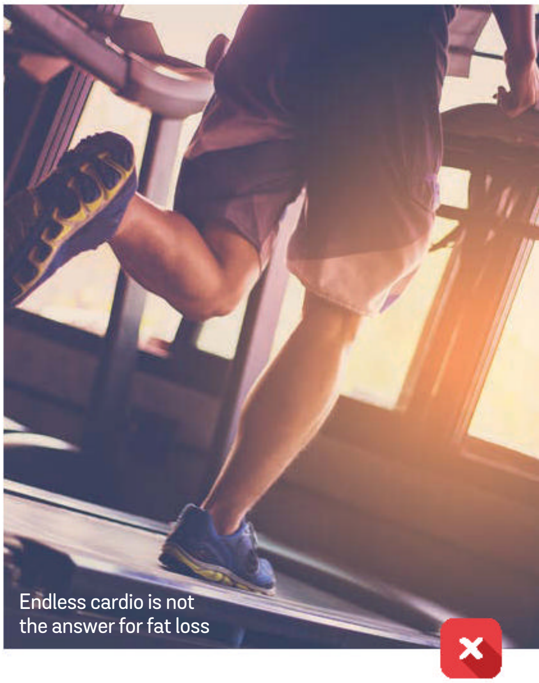
14 Don't overdo the abs work

"Training your abs does not guarantee visible abs," says Morsia. "The only way to get visible abs is to reduce your body fat. My six-year-old son has abs. He has never trained abs in his life. He has abs because he has low body fat around his stomach."

The saying 'abs are made in the kitchen' rings true, and if they really are your number-one goal, a body fat percentage of 15% or lower is going to be required.

15 Stop doing hundreds of sit-ups

"When you do train abs, work the same way you train any other body part," adds Morsia. "Do 8-12 reps and 3-4 sets. A great exercise is a cable crunch: kneel down and hold the cable to your head, then crunch down. If you're not ready to do away with sit-ups, perform the exercise in a lower rep range and increase the resistance by holding a dumbbell or a plate."



Endless cardio is not the answer for fat loss

16 Don't spend hours on the treadmill

Endless cardio isn't the answer to getting in shape. "You'll lose fat," says Morsia, "but you will lose muscle, too. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn at rest – as you need a lot more food. Incorporating resistance training, not just cardio, helps you to retain muscle and makes your workouts more fun and varied. When people say they want to lose weight, they normally mean fat, because muscle loss occurs with weight loss."

A combination of cardio and resistance training – plus a calorie deficit – equals a winning fat-loss formula.

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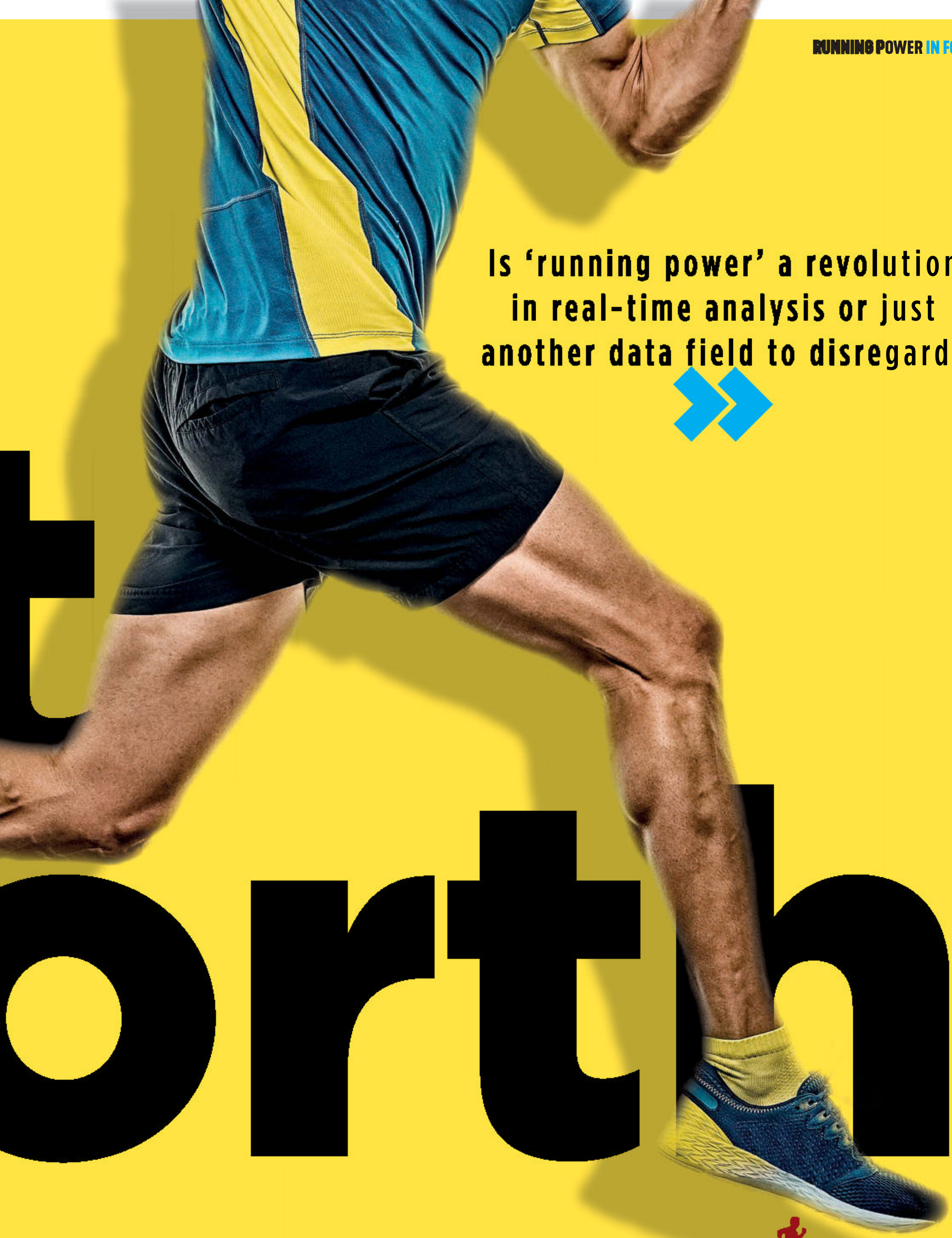

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Is 'running power' a revolution in real-time analysis or just another data field to disregard?

RUN STRONG

Running is so popular because it's so accessible: grab a pair of half-decent trainers and away you go. Get bitten by the running bug, though, and as you progress from parkruns to longer distances, you'll soon discover a plethora of technology that promises to make you faster in pursuit of PBs.

A watch to track time is generally the first port of call when investing in tech, but most smartwatches or bands will also include access to a heart rate monitor, for zone-based drills and detailed post-run analysis.

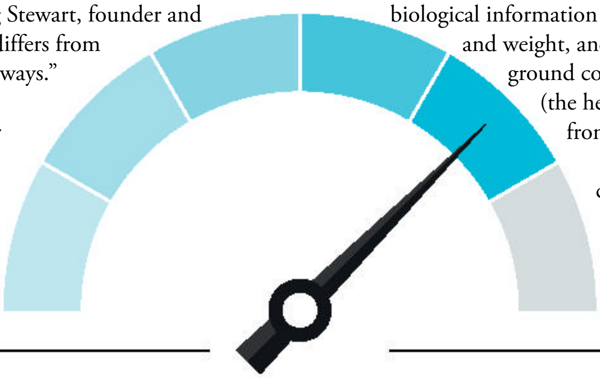
Over the last few years, another metric (and its accompanying tool) has started to make the leap to the mainstream. Added to Strava feeds in 2021 and unveiled in an update to certain Garmin smartwatches at the end of 2022, it comes with claims of real-time data that can not only transform your form and efficiency, but help you pace a race to perfection, too.

Running meter

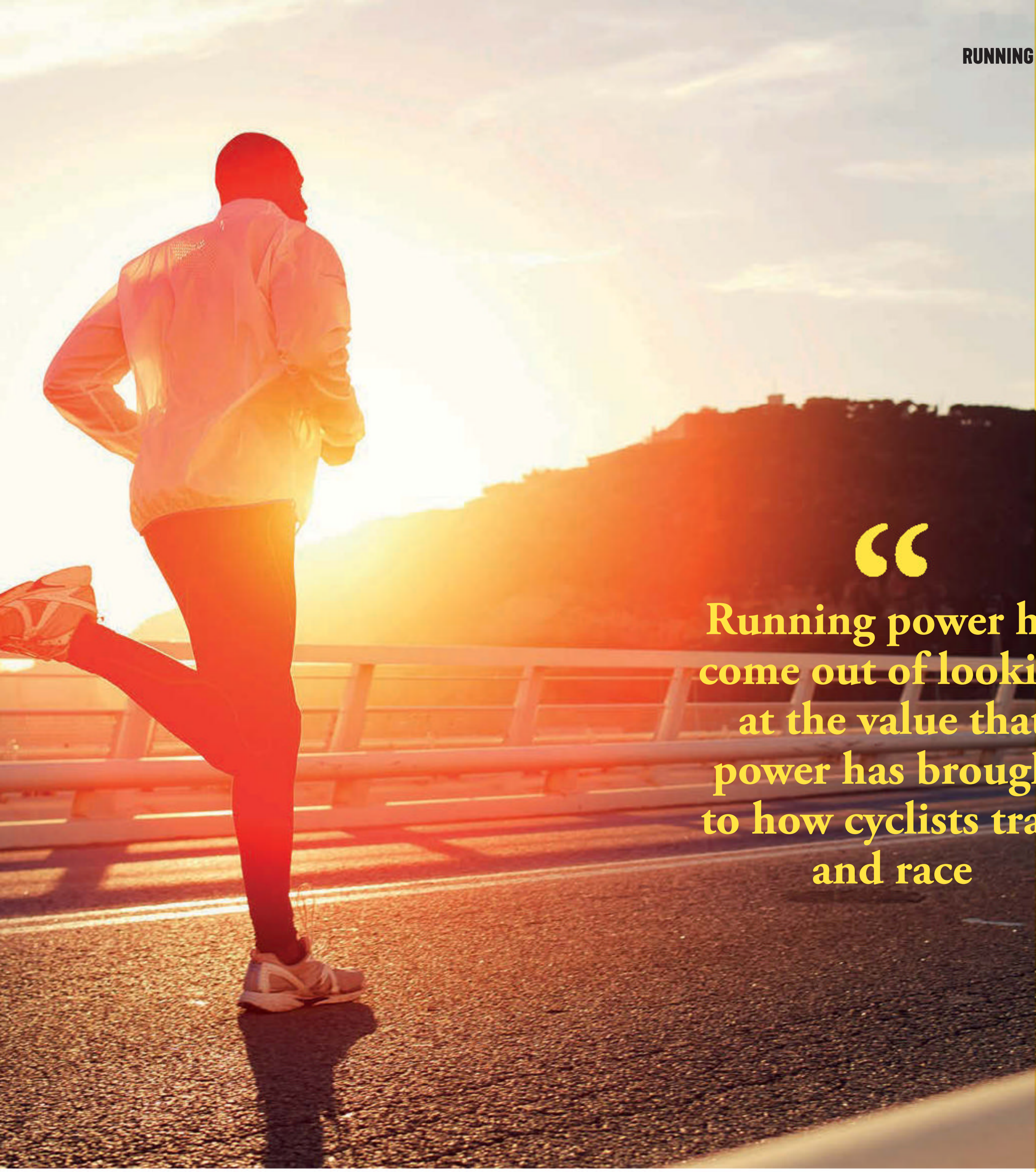
Cyclists will be familiar with the new measurement. Known as 'power', it's a way of calculating the amount of work that you're putting in. Displayed as watts – where one watt equals the amount of energy it takes to burn a Joule (1,000th of a kiloJoule) per second – it's essentially a recording of force.

"I think running power has come out of looking at the value that power has brought to how cyclists train and race over the last 15 to 20 years," says Doug Stewart, founder and running coach at TMR Coaching. "It differs from cycling power, though, in a number of ways."

In cycling, a power meter will be integrated into a pedal, crankset or rear wheel's hub, and will include a strain gauge that is able to measure the torque. Outside of a lab-based, treadmill setting, there isn't currently a strain gauge-based running power meter set-up. Instead, a running power meter calculates an approximate output using biological information you've provided, such as height and weight, and data including your cadence, ground contact time and vertical oscillation (the height you rise and fall mid-stride) from built-in sensors.



"A cycling power meter can be calibrated and validated to 98% or 99% accuracy," explains Stewart. "With running power, it's trying to create this number, but it isn't actually measuring force – it doesn't



> “Running power has come out of looking at the value that power has brought to how cyclists train and race

have a plate underneath your foot to capture that. In theory, if you were to have three different power meters on your bike, they should all measure within a watt or two of one another in the range of their accepted validity. With running power, you could probably have three completely different numbers, because they’re just based on calculations.”

Stewart himself was an early adopter of the technology and uses a Stryd foot pod. The American manufacturer has conducted its own research and found that its equipment is able to estimate a force profile within 95% accuracy of a lab-standard treadmill.

Zone in

Despite the slight guesstimation compared to modern cycling power meters, Stewart believes that running to power has a number of benefits over heart rate or pace. But before getting started, you need to work out your zones.

“First off, you have to determine your critical power, which is basically a threshold,” he explains.

While some power meters will auto-calculate your critical power based on data from your workouts, it is possible to conduct your own test “where you run max effort for nine minutes and max effort for three minutes.” From here, you can use an online calculator to set zones – from

> “If you can run faster for the same power output, it suggests that your running form has improved

easy to sprint – that are based on a percentage of your critical power.

Knowledge is power

"If you're training to heart rate or pace using a GPS watch, and you're doing intervals, there is always a lag. The heart rate takes a long time to catch up with [hard] efforts; it may take 30 seconds before you hit that pace on your watch, even though you know you've been running it for [that long]. With the power, it's as near real-time as you can get, so if you're trying to run a certain power, it will be on your watch within a second or two."

This live feedback can ensure you don't go off too hard before fading and working at the intensity a workout calls for, improving accuracy in the process. But its advantages aren't limited to HIIT sessions.

"Another value from it is when going up and down hills," adds Stewart. "If you were doing a pace-based workout, you would have to make sure you don't have too many undulations, whereas if you're using [power], it will respond very quickly to a gradient. If you're meant to be running at 320W, and you start to climb, you may see you're at 350 and know you can back off by that 10% and get back into the correct power target."

Power can come into its own when racing, too. "A lot of the apps now have calculators you can use," says Steward. "If you know your critical power is 'x', they will then give you a target for running a marathon and an estimated time, and you can go with confidence and run to that."

Understanding improvements

Post-workout, it's possible to combine it with heart rate and pace-based data, to see improvements or signs that you need to make some interventions.

"With cycling power, all things being equal, if you increase your power output, your pace will be faster," says Stewart. "With running power, if you can run faster for the same power output, it suggests that your running form has improved.

"You can also see very clearly how your heart rate and pace are responding to power. Power responds to fatigue, so at an easy or endurance run effort, you should see the heart rate staying relatively flat. If it's drifting away from the power output, it's a very clear indicator that you need to look at elements such as fuelling."

Straight torque

Stewart believes that "it could be beneficial for everyone", but concedes it's more for a serious runner who wants to do further analysis. "If you've got a GPS watch and a heart rate monitor, those two metrics are probably a good starting point for most people. But as you become more serious and you're looking at doing a marathon PB, you've had a couple of near misses, then maybe a power meter would be the difference where it helps with your pacing and ensuring you're training at the correct intensity."

You don't have to be focused on long distances to see a benefit when it comes to race day, but "pacing arguably could be more

POWER DRILLS

Check out running coach Doug Stewart's power-based training sessions...

1. Hill sprints

Find a steep hill where you can complete a 10-second, all-out effort and repeat with 30-second breaks between reps. "As long as it's the same hill," says Stewart, "you'll see you're producing more power and therefore going up the hill faster week after week."

2. Float recoveries

For more threshold-focused efforts, such as over/unders – where you run an interval above your race pace before a recovery interval slightly slower than race pace – a power meter can ensure "you can hit your interval intensity and the recovery intensity really quickly."

3. Form finder

Start running at a steady, easy pace on a relatively flat route, and make a note of your running power. You're now going to try to keep that number consistent and up the pace using your technique alone. "You might just up your cadence a little bit," says Stewart, "change your foot landing ever so slightly, alter your torso position or use your arms a little bit more or less and see how your running speed changes versus the power output. It can be a useful tool for people to work out what's a more economical running form, according to the power output."

important for a marathon runner than someone doing a shorter distance.” From his own experience, Stewart adds that it’s best for road or treadmill running.

“On the trails, if you start power hiking – so walking up the hills, which ultrarunners will do – the power numbers are disproportionately low to the effort and heart rate you’re putting in, so it doesn’t account for underfoot conditions,” he says.

Also, while power meters can account for things such as gradient, altitude and even wind, your running trainers can have an impact on your output:

“Carbon-plated shoes [cause] more height per strike and shorter ground contact time, which is what you would expect because they’re trying to spring you off the ground, so they may give a slightly different reading,” says Stewart. “However, if you’re wearing a carbon-plated shoe, chances are you’re looking at higher power outputs because you’re running faster.”

Plus, as there’s a good chance you will be saving these shoes for a key interval session or even race day itself, it shouldn’t skew your day-to-day training, but rather give you that power-based boost when you need it most.

> “The fact that running power is being integrated into apps shows it’s only going to become more prevalent

Tour de force

While it’s still relatively early days in the running power meter race, the fact that it’s being integrated into apps such as Strava and championed by Garmin shows it’s only going to become more prevalent. Although the lack of a unifying way of calculating output shows it’s still going through teething problems, its benefits over the rather primitive pace- and heart rate-based training methods are clear. Throw in the ability to accurately pace any race and prevent hitting the dreaded wall, and a running power meter might just be the ultimate piece of training technology.

POWER TOOLS

Three of the best power-measuring devices on the market

Stryd Foot Pod

From £219, stryd.com

The foot pod-based power meter clips onto your shoe’s laces and features sensors that can account for everything from altitude to wind. Compatible with all major smartwatches, its sensors can also upgrade a GPS-based watch’s accuracy, while its optional membership package provides tailored training plans.

Garmin Running Dynamics Pod

£59.99, garmin.com

The cheapest way to add power to your training, this pod clips to the back of your shorts and calculates a suite of stats, such as ground contact time and stride length, using its built-in accelerometer. Check its compatibility before buying, though, as it only works with certain Garmin smartwatches.

Garmin HRM Pro Plus

£119.99, garmin.com

This builds the running analysis features of Garmin’s Dynamics Pod into a chest-worn heart rate monitor strap. The power feature is only compatible with Garmin devices for now, but it has better compatibility than the Dynamics Pod, plus it’s waterproof, making it a wise choice for multi-sport athletes.

Words: Charlie Allenby | Main photography: Shutterstock

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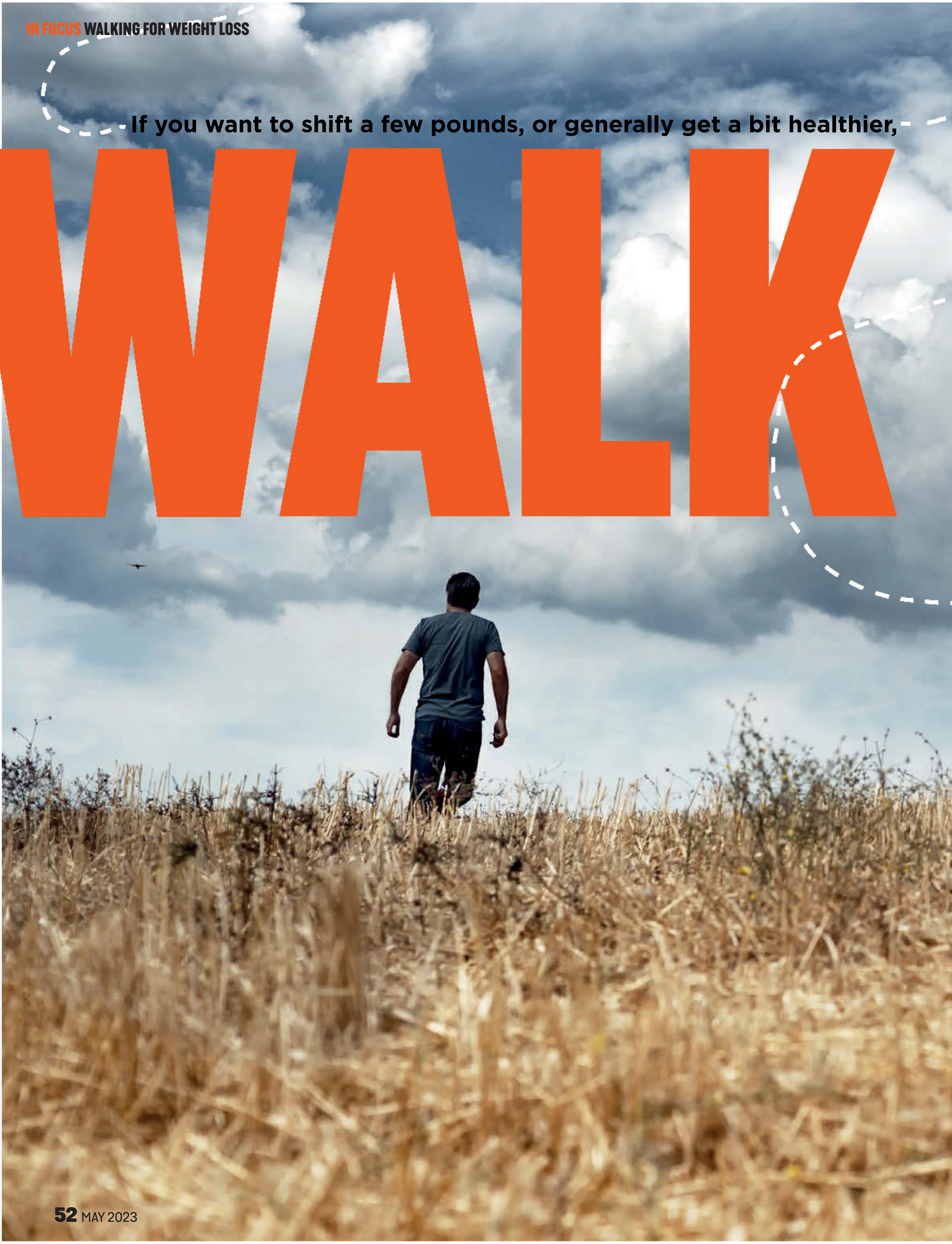


IT OFF

here's why upping your step count is the best place to start

May is National Walking Month, and though it might sound simplistic, stepping to it is one of the most accessible and easy ways to get in shape and kick-start your fitness journey. But while we all know about getting the recommended 10,000 steps a day, it's rarely explained why that's a guideline.

"Any exercise that increases your heart rate is good for weight loss, but walking is so easy because you don't need loads of kit – you can just go out your front door and walk around the block a few times," says the Institute of Sport, Exercise and Health's Dr Ian Beasley.

He adds that walking is low impact – "you are very unlikely to get injured," and it doesn't have the socio-psychological barriers that can come with other cardiovascular exercises, such as running or swimming. "If you think you don't look good in running kit, that doesn't really matter because you're just walking – it's what everyone does."

It's also a good gateway form of exercise for those who haven't been active for a while and are concerned about pushing themselves too hard, too fast. "When people get out of breath and it hurts a bit, they get scared," explains Beasley. "Walking is good, because you don't have to go mad with your heart rate."

Is walking good for weight loss?

Short answer, yes. A study from 2018 found that walking 10,000 steps a day, with just over a third of that coming in intervals of more than ten minutes, saw people lose weight; while a 30-minute walk at 3mph burns 138.9kcals if you're a 70kg male (and even more if you're heavier). To understand why walking is good for weight loss, though, it's important to have a quick science lesson on how the body fuels different intensities of exercise.

"Walking is an aerobic exercise," explains Beasley. "In other words, as you do it, you breathe in air. That air has got oxygen in it and the oxygen 'pays' for the exercise." The oxygen is transported to muscles in your blood, where it's used by mitochondria in cells to create energy using your body's fat and glucose (sugar) stores. With high-intensity anaerobic exercise, oxygen can't be delivered quickly enough, so glucose is broken down within the muscles themselves to create energy.

Your body therefore only uses fat as a fuel source during aerobic exercise, but the ratio of fat to glucose can depend on your heart rate and fitness levels. "If I'm really unfit and I go out walking, my primary fuel is going be glucose," explains Beasley. "But the fitter I get, [the more I'll] use fat as my primary source. It takes four to six weeks to get fit enough before you start using those fat stores optimally. Some studies have also suggested that optimal fat loss occurs below 65% of your maximum predicted heart rate." Go above that, and you increase the proportion of glucose used as a fuel source.

Beasley caveats, however, that "the real problem for very obese people is they can't walk very far without getting out of breath, because they're carrying too much weight," and suggests that "dieting in the first phase is the most important thing to lose a bit of weight and then gradually start walking."

He also warns against expecting instant results. "Don't expect the weight to drop off in the first few weeks, because it really won't. You've got to walk probably three or four times a week for half an hour – then you'll get the best out of it."

How to burn more calories by walking

The most obvious way is simply to increase time on feet, but upping the speed and gradient can also have an effect – hence the popularity of the viral treadmill-based '12-3-30 workout' on TikTok (see below).

"Nordic walking – walking with sticks – will also accelerate the calorie burn," adds Beasley, "because you're using your arms, you're using more muscles, your use of oxygen will go up and it's likely that you'll lose a bit more fat."

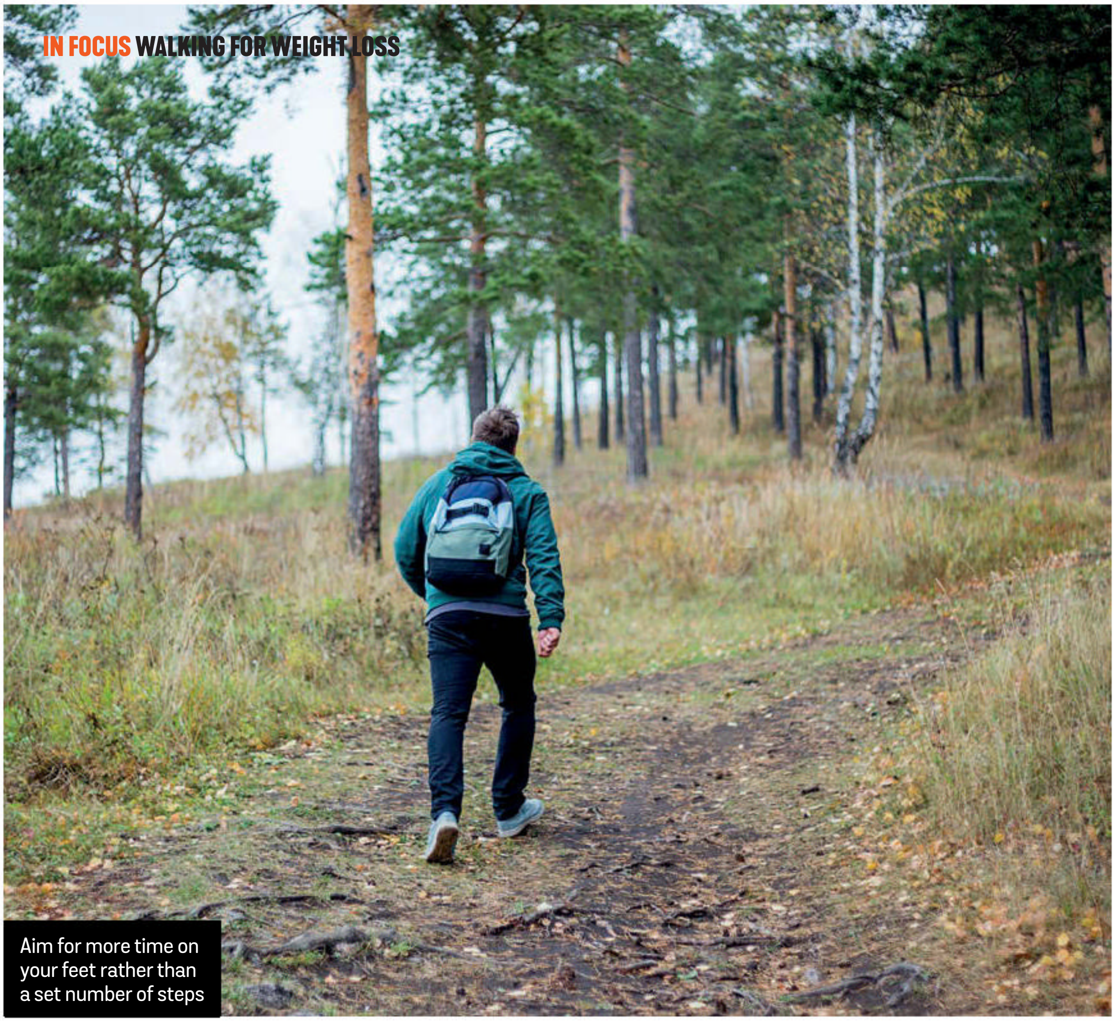
If you're struggling to fit walks into your schedule, one way of incorporating them is through incidental exercise. "If you're at work and you need to go to the post office at lunchtime, instead of going straight there, walk around the block [on your way there] and back around the block on your way back. That's your exercise for the day and you don't have to fit it in when you get home."

Finally, step count isn't the be all and end all. "If you look at the studies, they all say time rather than steps," Beasley explains. "If you're doing your 10,000 steps, they

HOW TO DO 12-3-30

- Set a treadmill to an incline of 12 and speed of at least 3mph.
- Now simply walk like this for 30 minutes.
- Avoid holding onto the handrails – this will reduce your energy expenditure.
- As your fitness improves, increase either the incline or the speed.

> "Nordic walking will accelerate the calorie burn, because you're using your arms, you're using more muscles, your use of oxygen will go up and it's likely that you'll lose a bit more fat



Aim for more time on your feet rather than a set number of steps

say that's 400 to 500 calories a day, but everyone's so individual, it's difficult to tie that down." He recommends investing in a smartwatch that can track your calories burned more accurately.

Additional health benefits

Walking isn't just beneficial for weight loss. Like other forms of aerobic exercise, it can have a knock-on effect, creating a positive cycle that, in the long-term, will reduce risks of a number of different health conditions.

"Aerobic exercise helps control your cholesterol," says Beasley. "Cholesterol is the thing that promotes the hardening of the arteries." Known as atherosclerosis, it makes it difficult for blood to flow through them, increasing your risk of heart attack or stroke. "If you can control your cholesterol, then you control the hardening of the arteries."

Walking can also help to control your use of insulin, reducing your chances of getting type 2 diabetes. "Your use of sugar and your control of glucose is facilitated by aerobic exercise," Beasley says. "We all have some insulin, and the job of insulin is to allow sugar or glucose to enter cells and do their job. If you exercise, your sensitivity to the insulin you have is heightened, so you don't need to produce so much of it. Additionally, your control of glucose is much better.

"The real problem is that overweight people have less insulin sensitivity, so [their pancreas] has to produce loads of it in order to control their glucose." Over time, your cells become resistant to insulin, reducing their ability to take glucose from the blood, leaving you with high levels of sugar in your bloodstream and a pancreas that simply isn't able to produce enough insulin.

"The other problem with insulin is it's a storage hormone, so you store everything, including fat, and that's why you put on weight – it's a vicious circle. You can break the pattern by exercising: because it makes your blood vessels and your heart much more efficient, then your blood pressure is controlled as well. Walking is a fantastic, and often underused, tool for achieving those health aims." ●

> "
> **Like other exercise, walking can have a knock-on effect, creating a positive cycle that will reduce risks of a number of health conditions**

WALK THIS WAY

Seven ways to maximise weight loss with walking

1. HIT THE POOL
Lower-body injuries can make the low-impact nature of walking a stretch for some. Fortunately, a study has shown that taking the weight off by walking in water is just as effective for body fat reduction as a stroll on land.

2. STICK WITH IT
Nordic walking's use of poles adds an upper-body element, increasing the energy used compared to walking alone, while also reducing the load on the lower body, making it ideal for those starting their weight-loss journey. To make the biggest gains, a literature review published in 2019 found that the optimum length of Nordic walking was at least 60 minutes, which should be repeated four to five times a week.

3. DO TIME
Shifted weight and want to keep it off? A 2012 article suggests 70-80 minutes of walking a day is needed to prevent piling on the pounds again.

4. WALK TO WORK
If you struggle to hit your daily steps because of a sedentary job, a walking workstation could be the answer. Research from the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* found using a 'desk treadmill' helped study participants increase their steps by 2,000 per day, with some burning an extra 200kcals.

5. DIVIDE AND CONQUER
Splitting your walking up into smaller blocks isn't just more convenient, it could help you lose more weight, too. A study found that those who completed two 25-minute bouts of walking had a greater decrease in weight and waist circumference than another group who did it in one 50-minute block.

6. GET COMPETITIVE
Adding incentives or a competitive element can be all that's needed to increase your daily step count. Research from 2016 found that those who followed an 'enhanced' walking programme, which also included monthly wellness workshops and feedback, averaged more steps and weight loss than the control group.

7. UP YOUR GAME
Ramping up the treadmill's incline can have a similar impact on your weight loss. A study from the 1970s found that walking at a 10% gradient for 90 minutes five times a week helped participants lose almost 6kg in 16 weeks with no adjustments made to diets.

Words: Charlie Allenby | Photography: Shutterstock

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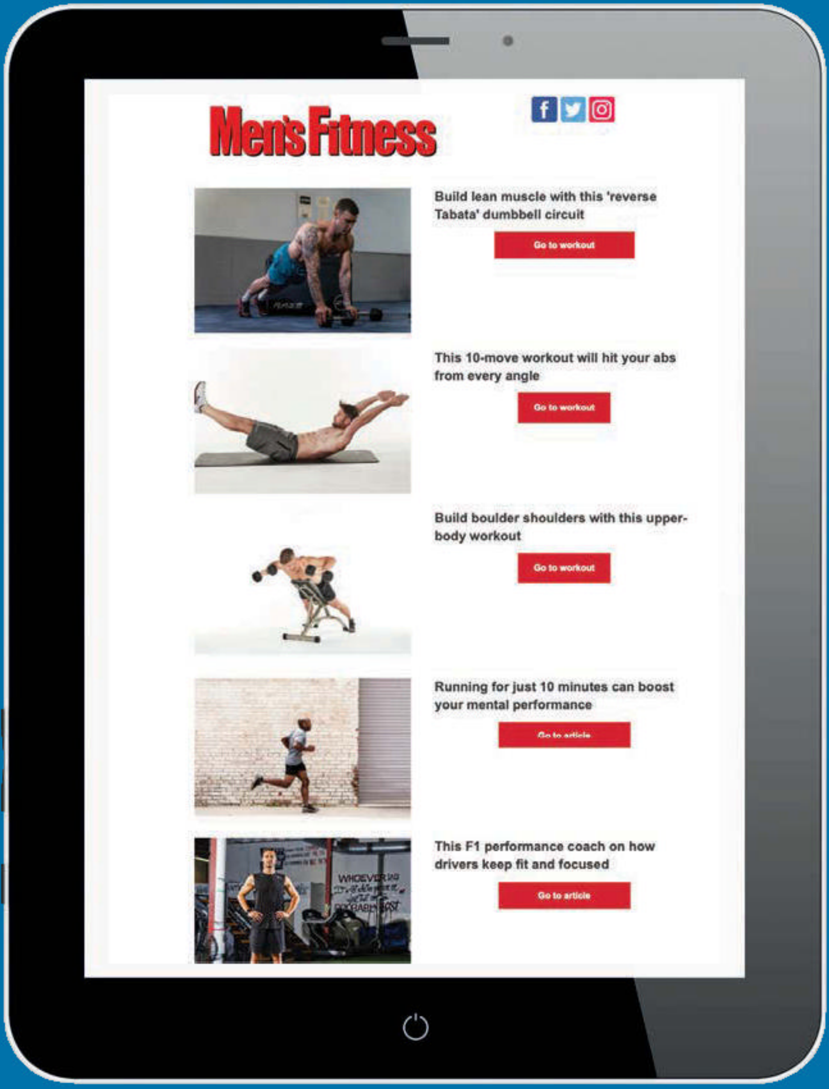

Men's Fitness

Build lean muscle with this 'reverse Tabata' dumbbell circuit

Go to workout

This 10-move workout will hit your abs from every angle

Go to workout

Build boulder shoulders with this upper-body workout

Go to workout

Running for just 10 minutes can boost your mental performance

Go to article

This F1 performance coach on how drivers keep fit and focused

Go to article

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FUEL

THE WHITE STUFF

Here's how the most popular alternatives compare to traditional cow's milk

Whole cow's milk

Per 100ml:
65kcals
3.3g protein
3.6g fat
4.7g sugars

☑ **PROS**
A fine source of calcium, potassium, and Vitamin D.

☒ **CONS**
High in calories, and you may be intolerant.

Oat

Per 100ml:
45kcals
1g protein
1.5g fat
4g sugars

☑ **PROS**
Generally contains more fiber than almond, soy and cow's milk. Also often enriched with added B vitamins.

☒ **CONS**
Less protein and more expensive than cow's milk.

Coconut

Per 100ml:
20kcals
0.1g protein
0.9g fat
1.9g sugars

☑ **PROS**
Its medium-chain fatty acids (MCFAs) are thought to lower metabolism, and it's lower in sugar, which helps prevent insulin spikes.

☒ **CONS**
Virtually no protein.

Hemp

Per 100ml:
27kcals
0.1g protein
2.7g fat
0.1g sugars

☑ **PROS**
Full of omega-3 fatty acids, magnesium, beta-carotene, iron and essential amino acids.

☒ **CONS**
Omega-3s from hemp aren't as easily absorbed as those from fish. Basically no protein.

Almond

Per 100ml:
24kcals
0.5g protein
1.1g fat
3g sugars

☑ **PROS**
High in vitamin E, low in cholesterol.

☒ **CONS**
Expensive, and low in protein and calcium.

Soy

Per 100ml:
54kcals
3.1g protein
1.7g fat
4.1g sugars

☑ **PROS**
Almost as much protein as cow's milk, but lower in fat.

☒ **CONS**
Low in leucine, so the body doesn't absorb the protein as easily. Also tends to be high in sugar.

Photography: Shutterstock

GREAT SHAKES

Your guide to questions of when, what and how much protein you need

You understand the importance of protein for muscle repair and recovery, and you probably use protein powders to get an immediate post-workout fix to kickstart that process. But knowing what kind of protein to take, how much, and when, can greatly improve how effectively you bounce back from hard training sessions.

Protein forms part of the structure of all cells and tissues. It is essential to the formation, repair and growth of muscle tissue. Proteins are made up of smaller molecules called amino acids. They link together to form complex structures – nine of which are essential and must be obtained from the diet.

Branched chain amino acids (BCAAs) are important here – especially leucine. Leucine triggers muscle protein synthesis (MPS), the natural process of producing protein to repair muscle damage caused by intensive exercise. Without leucine, muscle protein synthesis can't take place.

Protein powders offer a convenient and measured way to consume protein, ensuring a good balance of amino acids to support MPS after training. There are many types of protein powders, but they can all be categorised into either milk-based or plant-based....

BENEFITS OF MILK-BASED PROTEIN POWDER

Casein and whey are derived from milk. Whey is the most used protein in the sports industry. It's a by-product of cheese production, as the liquid part (whey) separates from the milk.

Casein and whey proteins contain all the essential amino acids, which makes them high quality. While they are both derived from milk, the speed at which they are absorbed in the body influences how they are best consumed.

Whey protein is quickly digested and amino acids stay elevated in the bloodstream for around 90 minutes after consumption. This type of protein is recommended immediately after exercise to help with MPS, and it's effective at stimulating growth in humans – which is why whey protein shakes and bars are often taken to improve MPS and the development of lean muscle mass.

Research has shown that whey protein offers benefits when used in tandem with resistance exercise. One study showed that males supplementing with whey protein had more significant relative gains in lean muscle mass.

Whey vs casein protein

There may be benefits to using whey over casein. According to a study published in the *International Journal of Sports Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism*, more significant gains in strength and lean body mass were observed among men supplementing with whey protein vs casein during a 10-week resistance training program.

Whey protein has also been shown to perform better than soy in augmenting lean body mass. It's also usually well tolerated, although people with lactose intolerance may need to be more careful, as it could trigger symptoms such as stomach cramps, bloating and flatulence.

Casein is broken down more slowly and amino acids remain elevated for up to five hours in the bloodstream. Studies have shown that pre-sleep casein protein ingestion (timing: 30 minutes before sleep; amount of casein protein ingested: 40-48g) could help post-exercise recovery, and positively affect acute protein metabolism and exercise performance. That may be worth considering if you train later in the evening.

What about whey protein isolate?

Whey protein isolate is similar to concentrate, but it has undergone extra processing steps, to filter out the protein further. This processing reduces the number of carbohydrates (lactose) and fat, resulting in a higher protein concentration.

Whey protein isolate is 90% or more protein, but because of the processing involved may lack other beneficial nutrients found in concentrate. That said, many products are fortified with vitamins and minerals.

Like whey isolates, plant protein isolates are a purified form higher in protein and generally about 90% protein. The most common are soy and pea, but others, such as hemp, are available.

> “Casein and whey proteins contain all the essential amino acids, which makes them high quality

MEET THE EXPERT

An award-winning, registered nutritionist and sports nutritionist with over 15 years’ experience, Rob Hobson runs his London-based consultancy, RHNutrition, seeing private clients and working with leading brands within the wellness industry. See what he has to offer at **robhobson.co.uk**

BENEFITS OF PLANT-BASED PROTEIN POWDER

Plant-based protein powders use soy, pea, hemp, brown rice, potato and seeds. These proteins are combined to achieve a good balance of amino acids, particularly leucine. Like whey, plant protein powders come as either isolate or concentrate, determining their protein concentration. This varies depending on the source. Soy and pea contain the most significant protein concentration, at 90% and 80% respectively. Soy is one of the few plant protein sources with all nine essential amino acids.

Plant-based protein powders are suitable for people following a vegan diet or for those who are lactose intolerant. Research has shown that plant proteins, such as pea, produce similar outcomes in body composition measurements, muscle thickness and strength (force production) compared to whey protein.

Plant-based protein powders are more nutrient-dense than dairy-based. They offer antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids, such as omega-3. These proteins are also more easily digested if you struggle with milk.

Some plant-protein powders contain less than 25g per serving, but you could take a larger dose or consume with carbohydrates, to help improve protein uptake. They may also lack essential amino acids, so look out for those that contain pea or soy alongside other plant sources – for a complete protein profile.

HOW MUCH PROTEIN IS NEEDED TO BUILD MUSCLE?

Muscle gains in response to resistance exercise are influenced by the training load, plus the amount, type and timing of protein intake during the following 24 to 48 hours.

The anabolic muscle response (growth and building) peaks after consuming 20-25g of protein. More than that doesn't have a significant effect. Which means consuming around 25g of protein post-training and at regular intervals (every few hours) across the day is more beneficial than higher, less frequent doses.

Current guidance suggests that the intake needed to support metabolic adaptation, repair, remodelling and renewal of protein in athletes ranges from 1.2-2g/kg bodyweight/day. Intakes in the range of 1.4-2g/kg bodyweight/day are recommended for building muscle mass and strength gains.

To optimise muscle protein synthesis, consume 0.25-0.4g protein/kg bodyweight (minimum 20g) in each meal and distribute your protein intake across the day. Research shows the 'anabolic window' extends at least 24 hours after exercising, making what you eat in the day after training just as important as immediately after working out.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU TAKE PROTEIN POWDER?

Food should always come first regarding nutrition. What you eat will inevitably contain more nutrients than just the protein found in a powder. To get the most from your diet, stick to protein powders post-workout and focus on food to get the remaining protein intake across the day.

> “STICK TO PROTEIN POWDERS POST-WORKOUT AND FOCUS ON FOOD TO GET THE REMAINING PROTEIN INTAKE ACROSS THE DAY

WHEN SHOULD YOU TAKE PROTEIN POWDER?

There is little evidence to suggest that protein powders are any more effective than food at promoting muscle growth and repair after training. However, protein powders offer a more convenient way to consume protein after exercise – especially if you don’t have time to sit down and eat. Many plant-based protein powders are an excellent option post-workout for those following a vegan diet. The blend of amino acids promotes muscle protein synthesis, as they contain the correct levels of leucine. These powders give you 20-25g of protein in a serving.

The best protein powder is likely to be the one that suits your needs. Most protein powders, whether plant-based or dairy-based, will support muscle protein synthesis after training. The one you choose will depend on personal preference and tolerance.

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FIT IN 15

Fast-track fat loss with this short and sharp two-move workout

Some days life gets in the way, and the best-laid gym plans go up in smoke. On these occasions, you need some quick – but far from easy – sessions in your back pocket to help you burn fat fast. This two-move ladder is exactly that.

Position a dumbbell between your feet, then take one big step forwards and place two light dumbbells on the floor. Now set your stopwatch and get ready to sweat.

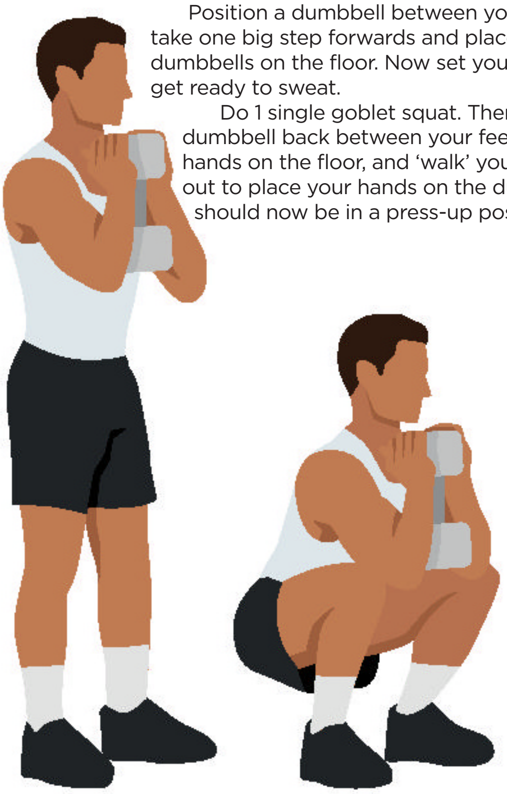
Do 1 single goblet squat. Then put the dumbbell back between your feet, place your hands on the floor, and 'walk' your upper body out to place your hands on the dumbbells – you should now be in a press-up position.

Complete a press-up, then brace your core and row the right dumbbell up to your side, followed by the left. Walk your hands back to your feet and return to standing. Easy? Good. It's downhill from here.

Repeating that sequence, you're then going to do 2 reps of goblet squats, followed by renegade rows. Then 3 reps (see where this is going), then 4, all the way up to 10 – resting only as needed. Still got some gas in the tank? Descend the ladder back down to 1.

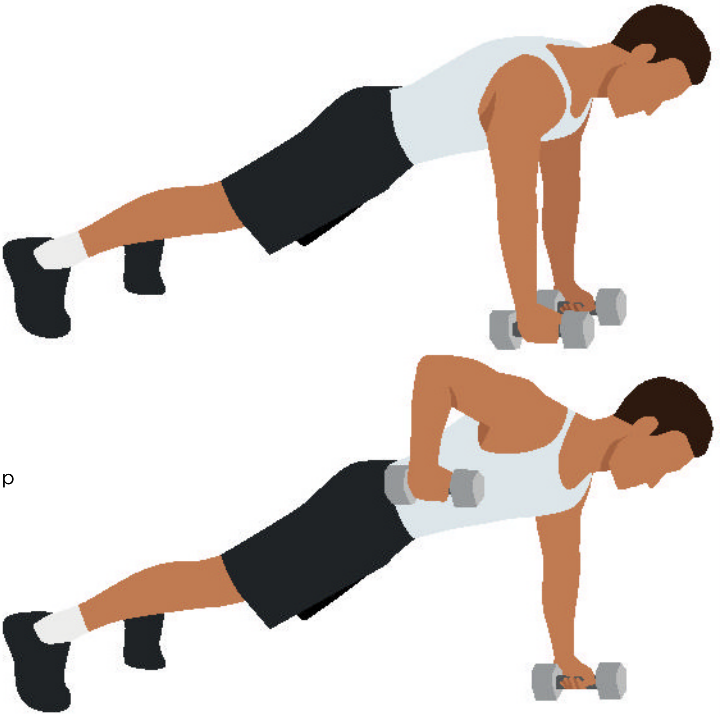
If you want to burn fat fast, the beauty of this workout is that it ticks multiple boxes. Your quads and glutes are going to be fired up by the goblet squats, and your abs, lats and even biceps are going to feel the force of the renegade rows.

The lack of rest is going to tax your lungs, too, spiking your heart rate and torching a fair amount of calories – with the added benefit of slashing your training time. See if you can get it done in 12 to 15 minutes.



1a. DUMBBELL GOBLET SQUAT

- Hold a dumbbell upside down at the base with both hands.
- Keeping your back straight and chest up, lower into a deep squat.
- Drive through your heels to stand.



1b. DUMBBELL PRESS-UP TO RENEGADE ROW

- With each hand on a dumbbell, begin in the press-up position (palms facing each other).
- With your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and your hips level, perform a press-up – lowering your chest until it's about an inch from the floor.
- As you press back up, row one of the dumbbells to your side. Keep your elbow tucked in and pause briefly at the top of the move.
- Return the weight and do the same with the other arm. That's 1 rep.

Illustrations: Shutterstock

"GONE ARE THE DAYS OF GETTING UP AT FIVE IN THE MORNING AND RUNNING TEN MILES. YOU'VE GOT TO OPTIMISE THE BOXING"

Elite boxing coach Shane McGuigan tells *MF* about the new way of doing things

At 35, Shane McGuigan is one of the most respected coaches in boxing. The son of former featherweight world champion Barry McGuigan, his modern methods have helped propel the likes of Lawrence Okolie, Josh Taylor, George Groves and Carl Frampton to world title success – establishing McGuigan as one of the most in-demand trainers around.

Under McGuigan, George Groves won the WBA super-middleweight title

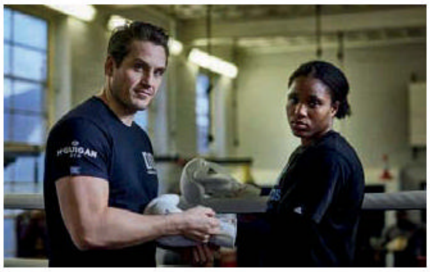
***Men's Fitness:* Was boxing a natural career path for the son of a world champion?**
Shane McGuigan: Not really. I took it up when I was 14, but dad didn't want me to box. I just wanted to get fitter. I went running at first and then decided to give boxing a go. I started sneaking off school to go to the local boxing gym. When dad got wind of it, he said, "Well, if you're going to box, I want to help you do it properly."

***MF:* You boxed until you were 22 and won three national titles, so how did the move to coaching come about?**
SM: I didn't enjoy the competition side of boxing, but I enjoyed the preparation side of it. I was interested in the coaching and the science. I stopped fighting and learned about anatomy, and did personal training courses at the elite Irish Strength Institute in Dublin. I got fascinated by things like the anabolic diet. I got an internship with the Charles Poliquin school out at Rhode Island, and learned a lot about the old-school methods of training and diet, which were ahead of their time.

***MF:* How does your approach differ when it comes to strength training?**
SM: You must realise that, when it comes to strength, consistency is key. You're not going to get especially strong in a ten-week training camp, or even two camps back-to-back. It's going to be a five-year process. Strength building needs to be a constant in a boxer's training – in and out of camp – with plenty of progression. I encourage my fighters to dedicate blocks of time ahead of a training camp just to getting their strength up, with plenty of benchwork. Unfortunately, they don't all do that, or else they'll come into camp strong, but heavy too. It's my job to get them to their weight, without losing too much of that strength.

***MF:* Is actual boxing still a key component to the pre-fight preparation?**
SM: Absolutely – boxing should always be the first session of the day. It must be the main focus. Gone are the days of getting up at five in the morning and running five, six, eight or ten miles. By doing that, you just come into your boxing completely fatigued. You've got to optimise the boxing, because if you don't, then the distraction can be costly. Once you make the mistake of not thinking about your boxing, that makes you vulnerable.

***MF:* How do you structure a training camp to get the best out of a fighter?**
SM: That's the beauty of being a coach: knowing where you've got to push the boundaries and where your boxer is at during every phase of the camp. Each fighter is unique in how they respond to training, and you train them differently according to their weight. A heavyweight, for example, will average maybe 40 to 50 punches per



One of his primary roles is to get fighters to their target weight without losing strength or power

> "You must realise that, when it comes to strength, consistency is key. It's going to be a five-year process

round. A lighter fighter will throw maybe 100. You need to know about energy systems, recovery, rotations of exercises, and how to increase training load and volume without fatiguing a fighter.

***MF:* So you begin by working on the weight?**
SM: Kind of. Typically, a boxer will come into camp maybe 15% over their target weight. So, we'll do a full-body block: maybe four weeks of body-composition work, including metabolic finishers (intense exercises performed at the end of a resistance training workout). We'll put them through peripheral heart activation stuff – exercises such as squats into chins – and we'll work on the biggest muscle parts: those furthest away from their heart, to increase blood flow and get more of a metabolic effect, keeping the reps pretty high.

***MF:* And as they get to their weight then it's about honing the strength and skills?**
SM: Yes, further into the camp, the training focuses on strength and then prioritises sparring. First off, we might do a lot of lower-body push, upper-body pull moves. Then maybe the next day we'll do posterior chain, lower-body pull works, moving into an upper-body press. From there, we'll introduce an anaerobic circuit with a week that'll look something like upper-body training on a Tuesday, and a high-threshold circuit on a Wednesday. Thursday might be a steady run, and then Friday might be a lower-body strength session.

In the last phase, along with the increase in sparring, we will start implementing plyometrics and power movements – but we'll still keep the reps fairly low.

***MF:* Of all the great fighters you have applied these methods with, who has been the fittest?**
SM: Josh Taylor was extremely fit – he could control the pace of his fitness training to the point where he was always at his threshold when he fought. That's when he'd get his best results. My dad was the same, always fighting at threshold.

***MF:* As a boxing purist, how do you feel about influencers doing battle in the ring?**
SM: Boxing is my passion and my livelihood. Unfortunately, there are a lot of cowboys in this sport – and there's no one overall governing body to protect everyone involved. Gimmick fights might bring a lot of eyeballs to the sport, but if one of these fights ends up with someone seriously injured or lapsing into a coma, then that's going to be so much worse for boxing. ●

> **“Each fighter is unique in how they respond to training, and you train them differently according to their weight**

Interview: Rob Kemp | Main photography: Joseph Sinclair | Workout photography: Eddie Macdonald

TRY THIS:

Rev your metabolism and improve fight-ready conditioning with this metabolic finisher

1a. Slam Ball

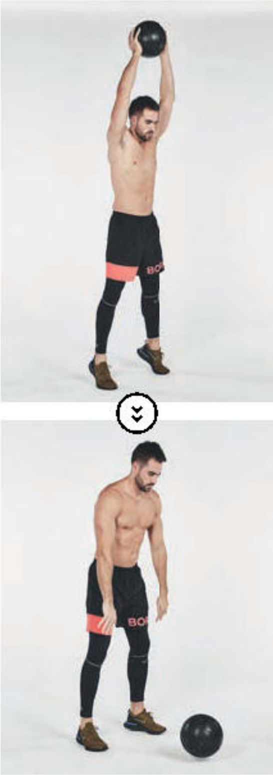
Reps: 10
Rest: Straight into 1b

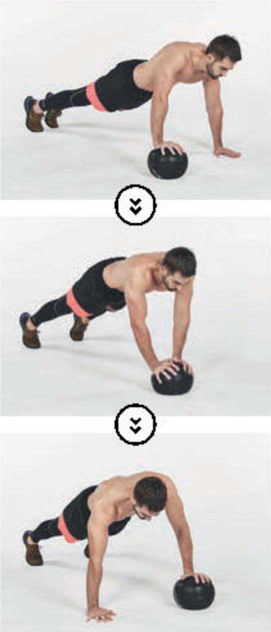
- Grab a medicine ball and assume a strong stance.
- Pick the ball up above your head and slam it onto the floor.
- Maintain good squat form whenever you grab the ball from the ground.

1b. Alternating Medicine Ball Press-Up

Reps: 10, then repeat 1a

- Assume a push-up position, with one hand on the ball.
- Place both hands on the ball.
- Keeping one hand on the ball, place the other hand on the floor, then bring that hand back onto the ball.
- Continue to alternate.





Four-week workouts

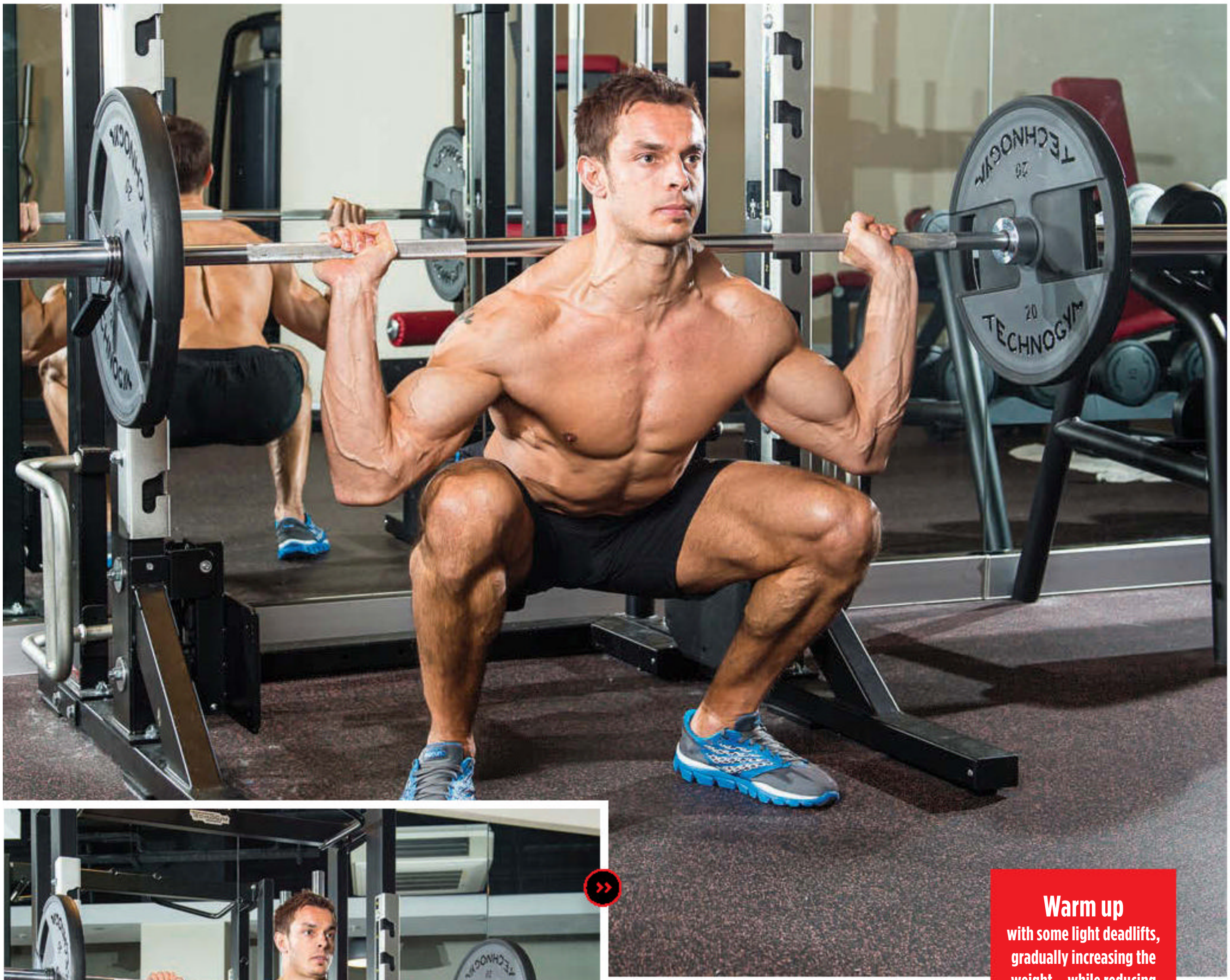
These routines use effective techniques, such as supersets and compound moves, to give you the best muscle-building bang for your buck. Changing your workout every four weeks ensures your muscles never adapt to the exercises, forcing them to take on new challenges and keep growing. There are either three or four weekly sessions in each workout, and you can do all six workouts in order or pick and choose the right ones for your goals. Whichever approach you take, you're likely to see a phenomenal physical transformation.

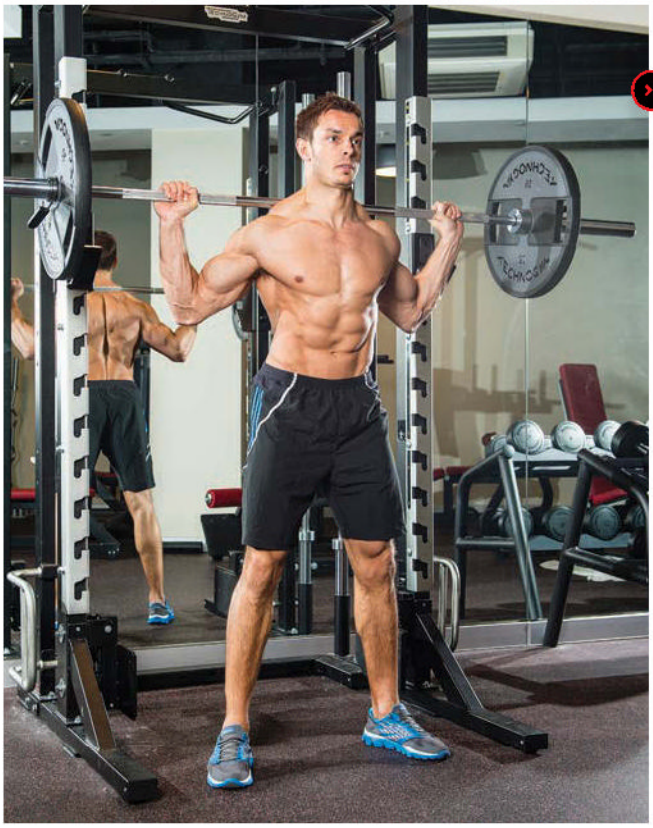
THE BREAKDOWN

Month 1 72
Month 2 76
Month 3 80
Month 4 84
Month 5 88
Month 6 92

MONTH 1 WORKOUT 1
Legs and chest

Each session, three heavy lifts will fire up your muscles, while a high-rep superset will fatigue them so you get stronger, faster





Warm up with some light deadlifts, gradually increasing the weight – while reducing the number of reps – until you hit your work-set weight target.

1. SQUAT

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

- Rest the bar against the back of your shoulders – not on your neck – and hold it with an overhand grip slightly wider than your shoulders. Keep your elbows pointing down.
- Your feet should be just wider than shoulder-width apart, with your toes pointing outwards slightly.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive back up through your heels.

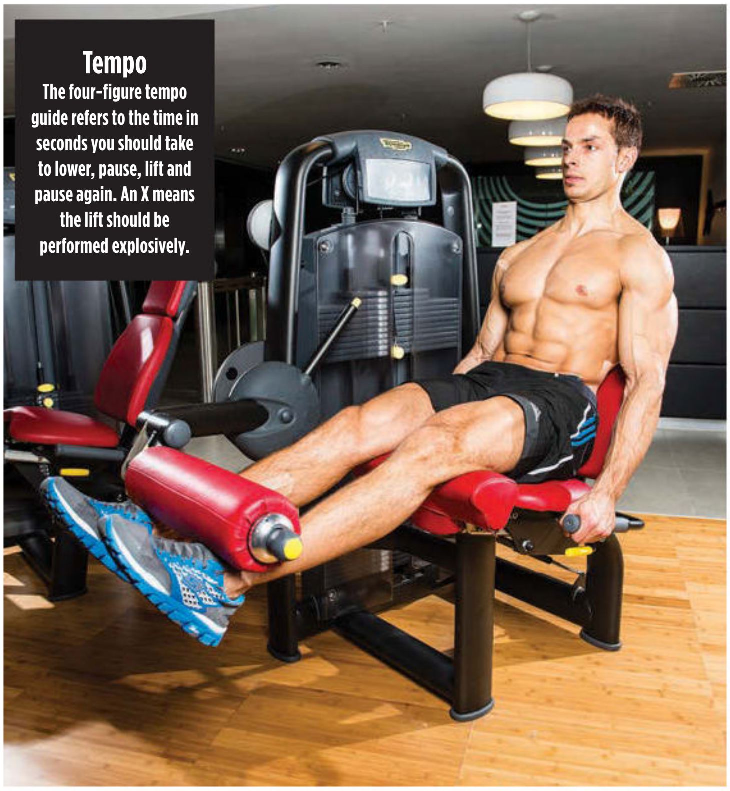
2. LEG EXTENSION

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- With the pad against your lower shins, straighten your legs to raise it.
- Return slowly to the start.

Tempo

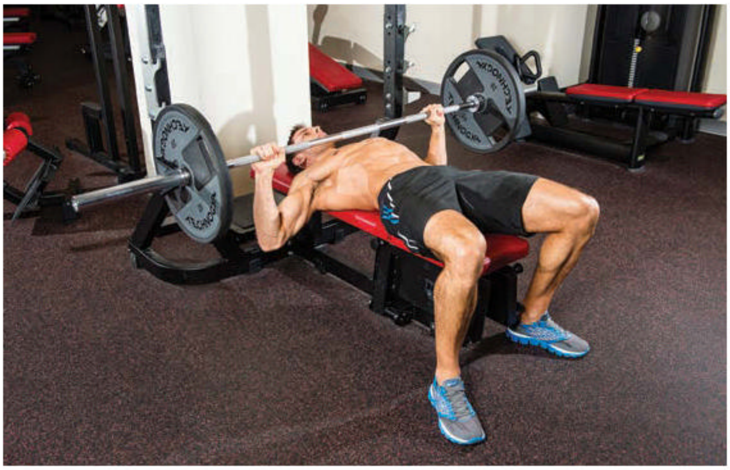
The four-figure tempo guide refers to the time in seconds you should take to lower, pause, lift and pause again. An X means the lift should be performed explosively.



3. BENCH PRESS

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

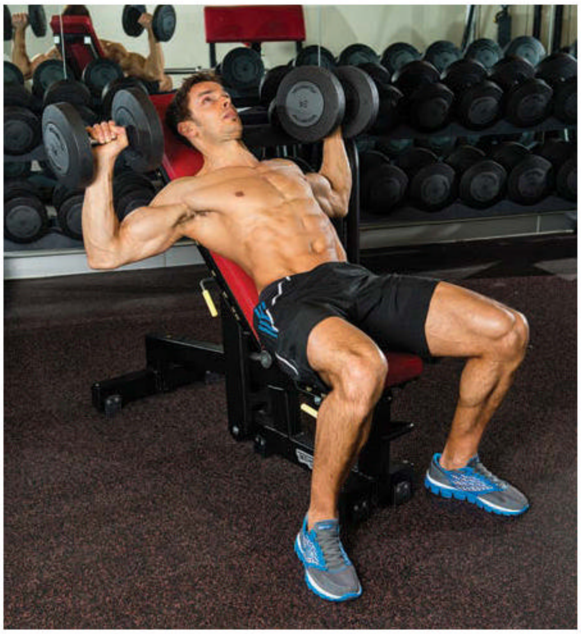
- Lie on the bench with your feet on the floor. Hold the bar with an overhand, shoulder-width grip.
- Lower the bar to your chest, bending your arms until your elbows are at 90°, so the bar is almost touching the middle of your chest.
- Drive your feet into the floor and push the bar strongly back to the start.



4a. INCLINE DUMBBELL BENCH PRESS

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

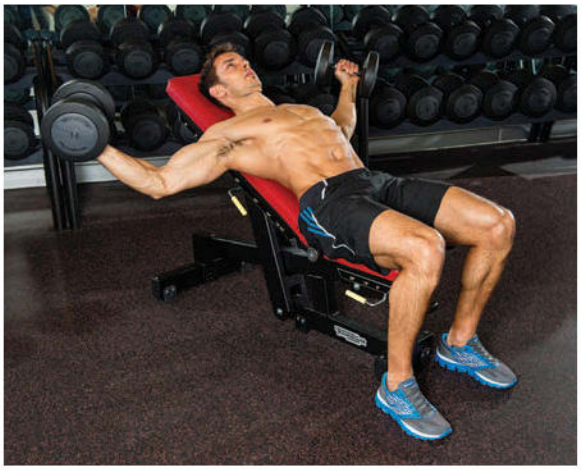
- Lie on a bench set at a 45° angle, holding a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor and your back against the bench.
- Press the weight above your head, but don't lock out your elbows at the top.
- Slowly lower the weight back to your chest, flaring your elbows out to the sides.



4b. INCLINE DUMBBELL FLYE

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 2 mins

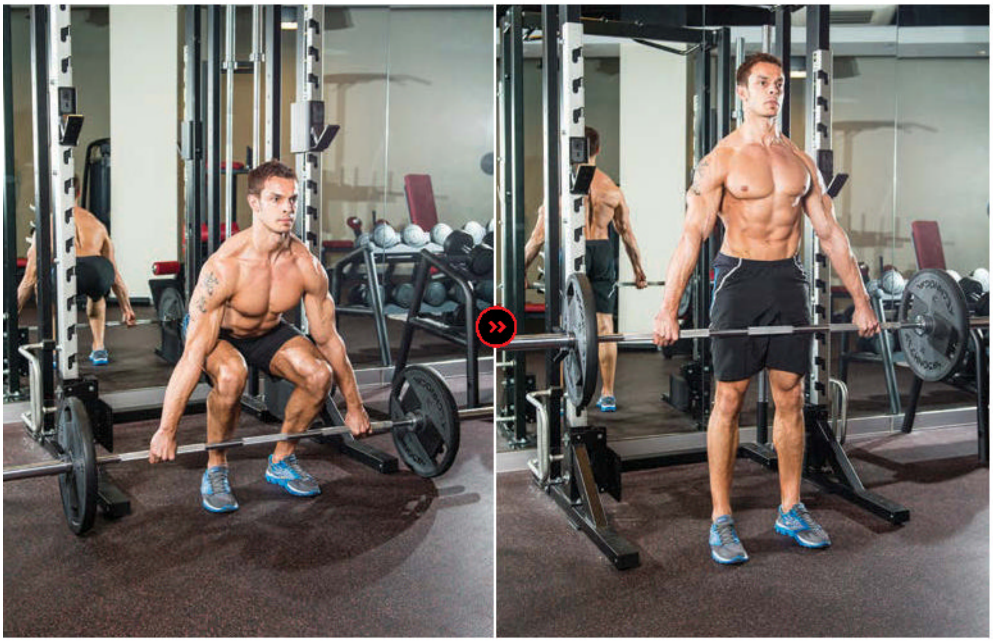
- Lie on an incline bench, holding a dumbbell in each hand above your chest.
- Keep your head and upper back on the bench and your feet flat on the floor.
- Keeping your elbows bent, lower the weights to the sides as far as is comfortable.
- Use your chest to reverse the move and bring the weights to the top.



MONTH 1 WORKOUT 2

Back and legs

Warm up
with some light deadlifts, gradually increasing the weight – while reducing the number of reps – until you hit your work-set weight target.



1. DEADLIFT

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

- Stand in front of a barbell and squat to grip the bar with either an overhand or alternating grip outside your knees.
- Keeping your core braced and your shoulders retracted, use your glutes to power the initial lift, pushing down through your heels.
- Keep the bar close to your body and, as it passes your knees, push your hips forwards. Keep your shoulders back throughout the move.
- Reverse the movement back to the start.

2. SEATED HAMSTRING CURL

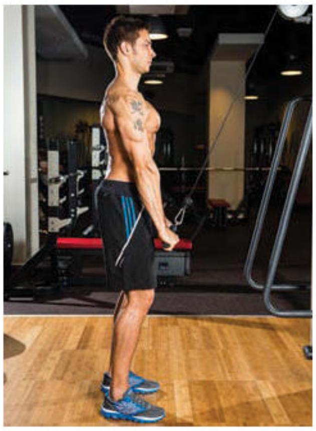
Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- With the pad against the back of your lower calves, lower it by contracting your hamstrings.
- Return slowly to the start.

3. CHIN-UP

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

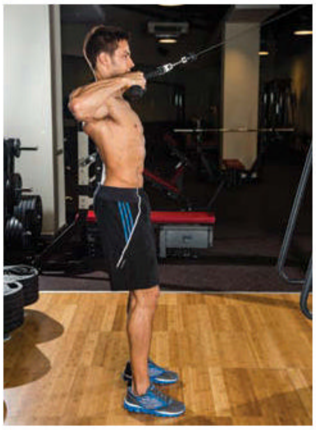
- Grasp the bar with an underhand grip, with your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended.
- Pull yourself up by squeezing your lats together.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, lower yourself back to the start.



4a. CABLE STRAIGHT-ARM LAT PULL-DOWN

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

- Stand up tall, holding a straight bar cable handle attached to the high pulley of a cable machine.
- Keeping your arms straight, pull the bar all the way down to your thighs.
- At the bottom, squeeze your lats and triceps, then return to the start.
- Drive back up through your heels.



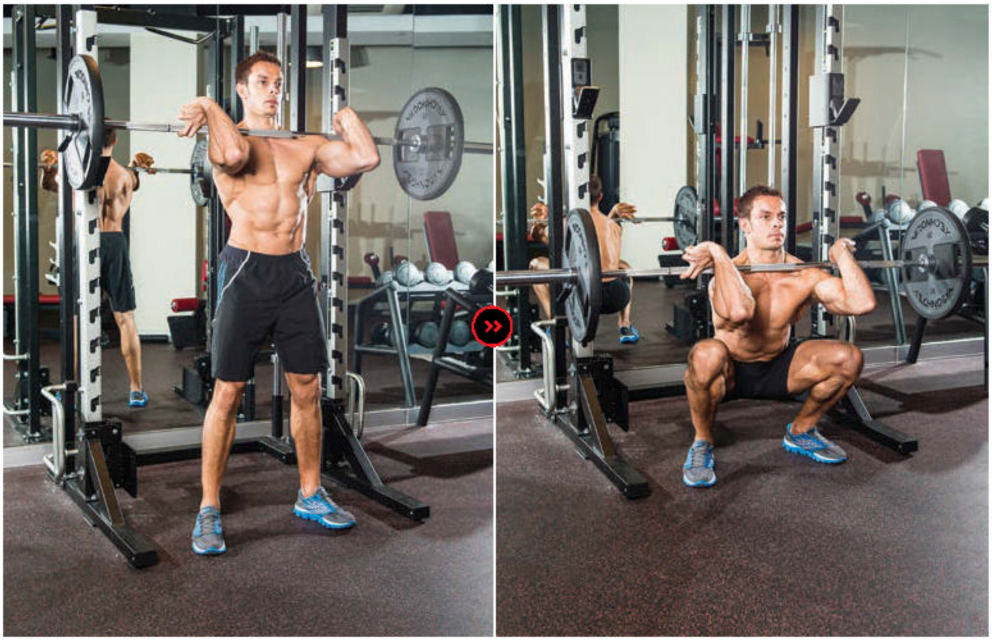
4b. CABLE FACE PULL

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 2 mins

- Attach and hold a double-rope attachment to the high pulley on a cable machine.
- Start with your arms fully extended, with your palms facing the floor.
- Pull the handles towards you, keeping your upper arms horizontal, so the handles go either side of your face.
- Return to the start.

MONTH 1 WORKOUT 3
Legs and shoulders

Warm up with some empty-bar front squats, gradually increasing the weight – while reducing the number of reps – until you hit your work-set weight target.



1. FRONT SQUAT

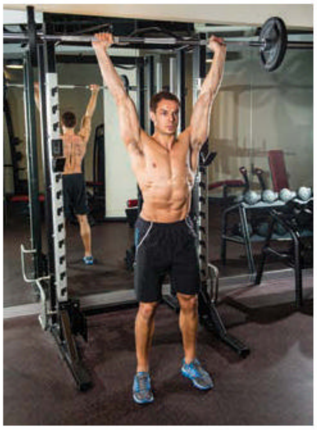
Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

- Rest the bar on the front of your shoulders, gripping it with your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, with your elbows pointing forwards and your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Maintain a natural arch in your back and keep your core braced throughout the move.
- Squat down until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive back up through your heels to return to the start.

2. LEG PRESS

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

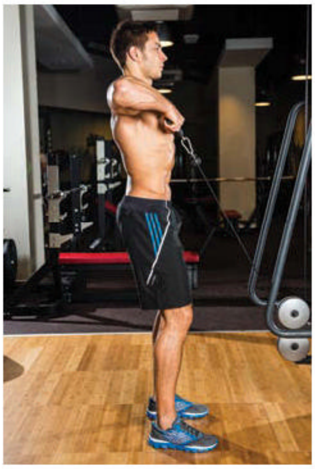
- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- Release the lock, then push through your heels to push yourself away from the platform. Pause briefly at the top, then bend your knees to return to the start.



3. OVERHEAD PRESS

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 20X0 / Rest 2 mins

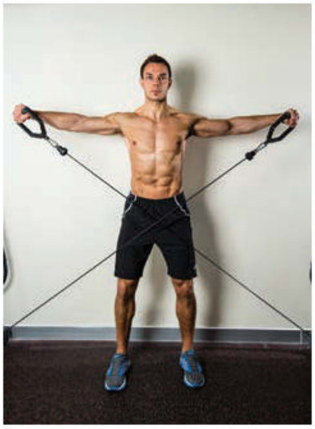
- Position a bar on your upper chest, making sure your hands are just wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.
- Press the bar upwards, until your arms are extended.
- During the lifting phase, keep your core braced and don't tilt your hips forwards.
- Lower the bar back to your chest and repeat.



4a. CABLE UPRIGHT ROW

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

- Stand tall, holding a straight or EZ-bar handle attached to the low pulley of a cable machine with an overhand grip.
- Leading with your elbows, pull the bar up until your hands are at shoulder height.
- Slowly lower the bar back to the start.



4b. CABLE STANDING TWO-ARM LATERAL RAISE

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 2 mins

- Attach a D-handle to a pulley at the bottom of each side of a cable machine.
- Hold the handles (left handle in your right hand and vice versa) with hands crossed in front of you at waist height.
- Raise the handles out to the sides, keeping a slight bend in your elbows, until your arms are horizontal, then lower slowly under control back to the start.

MONTH 2 WORKOUT 1

Chest and back

Do each giant set – four moves done back to back without rest – four times, to torch fat and pack on muscle

Giant set 1

1a. BENCH PRESS

Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 0 secs

- Lie on the bench with your feet on the floor.
- Hold the bar with an overhand grip, hands shoulder-width apart.
- Lower the bar to your chest until your elbows are bent at 90° and the bar is just above your nipples.
- Drive your feet hard into the floor and push the bar back up to the start.

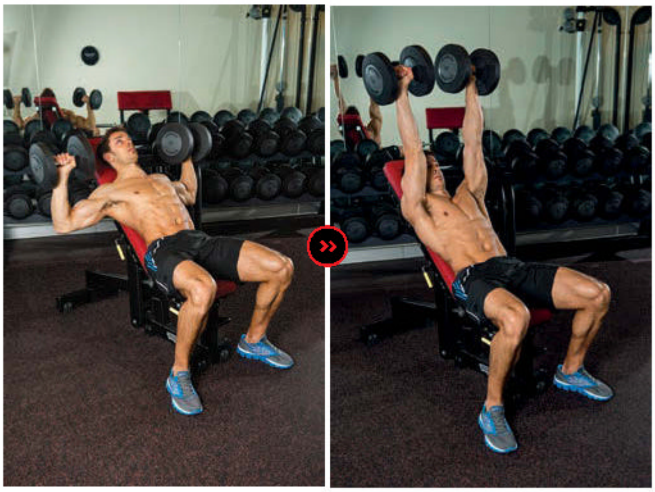
Warm up

with some empty-bar bench presses, gradually increasing the weight and decreasing the number of reps until you reach your work-set target weight.

1b. INCLINE DUMBBELL BENCH PRESS

Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 0 secs

- Lie on a bench set at a 60° angle, holding a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor and your back against the bench.
- Press the weights directly above your head, but don't lock out your elbows at the top.
- Slowly lower the weights back to your chest, flaring your elbows out to the sides.



1c. CABLE FLYE

Reps 10 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 0 secs

- Stand in the middle of a cable machine with a split stance, holding a D-handle attached to the high pulley in each hand with your palms facing.
- Keeping a natural arch in your back and bracing your core, bring your hands across so they meet in front of you.
- Squeeze your chest muscles before returning slowly to the start, keeping the weight under full control.

1d. PRESS-UP

Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 3 mins

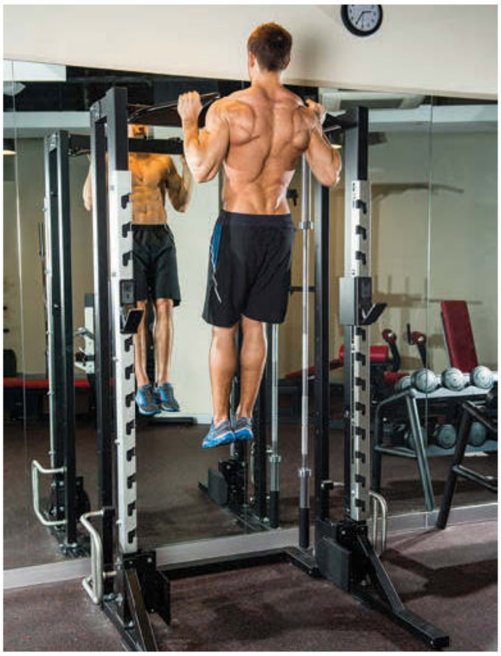
- Start with your hands shoulder-width apart and your body straight from head to heels.
- Lower yourself until your elbows reach 90˚, then press back up.

Giant set 2

2a. PULL-UP

Reps 6 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 0 secs

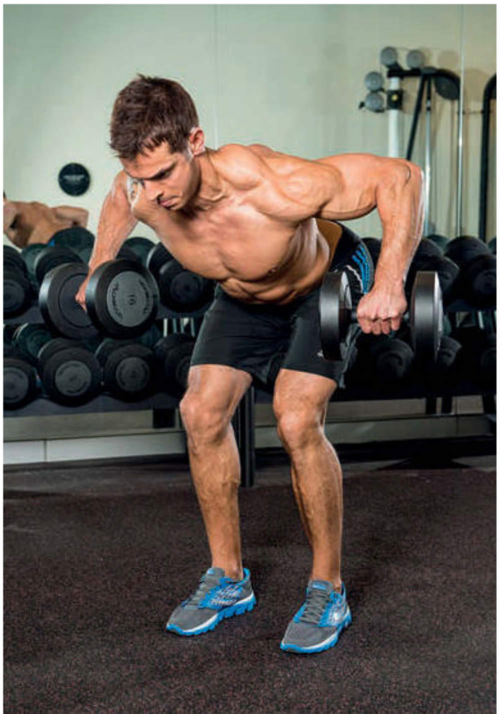
- Grab the bar or handles with an overhand grip, with your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended.
- Squeezing your lats together, pull yourself up.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, pause briefly, then slowly lower yourself back to the start.



2b. DUMBBELL BENT-OVER ROW

Reps 10 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 0 secs

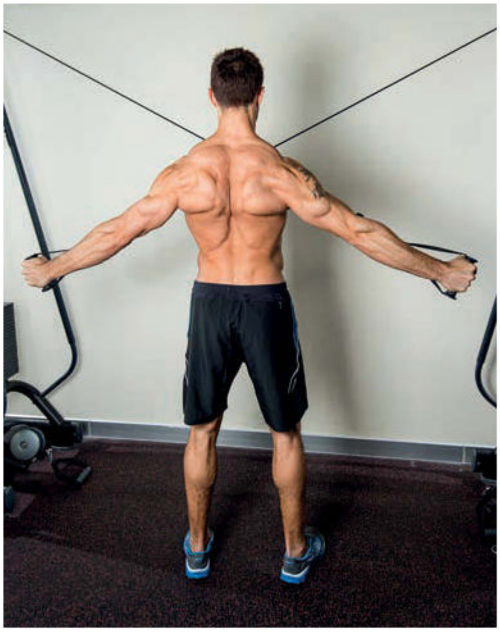
- Start with your core braced, your back straight and your shoulder blades retracted, holding a dumbbell in each hand with an overhand grip.
- Bend your knees slightly and lean forwards from the hips.
- Row the weights up until your upper arms are horizontal, by retracting your shoulder blades, then return slowly to the start.



2c. STANDING CABLE REVERSE FLYE

Reps 10 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 0 secs

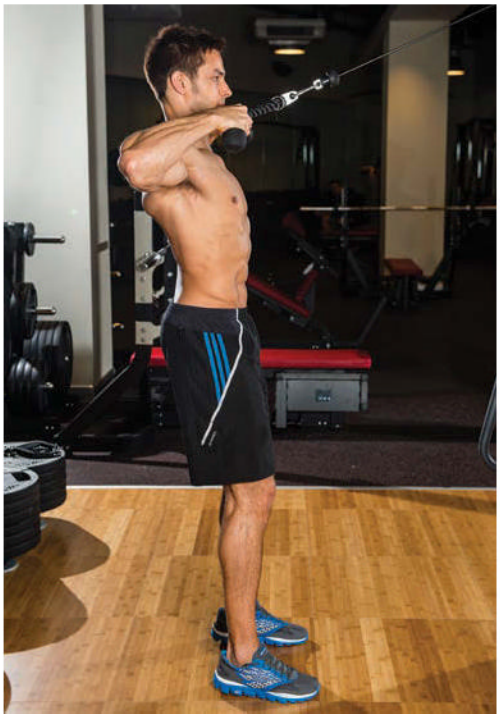
- Stand in the middle of a cable machine with your arms crossed, holding a D-handle attached to the high pulley in each hand at shoulder height.
- Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, pull both handles across your body and down, until your arms are extended and your shoulder blades are retracted.
- Return to the start, keeping the weight under control.



2d. CABLE FACE PULL

Reps 15 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 3 mins

- Hold a double-rope attachment fixed to the high pulley on a cable machine.
- Start with your arms fully extended, palms facing the floor.
- Pull the handles towards you – keeping your upper arms parallel to the floor – so the handles go either side of your face.
- Return to the start.



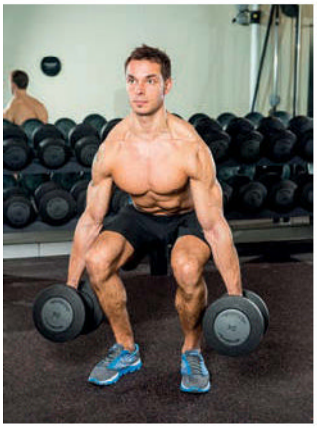
MONTH 2 WORKOUT 2
Legs and abs

Giant set 1

1a. DUMBBELL SQUAT

Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 0 secs

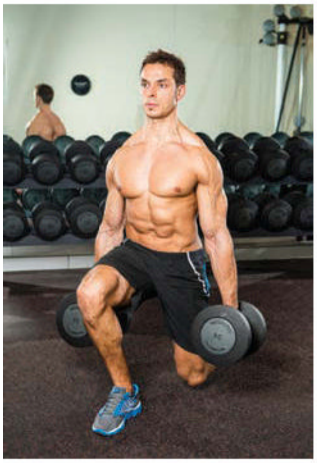
- Stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart, holding a dumbbell in each hand by your sides.
- With your core braced and a natural arch in your back, squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor, keeping your knees in line with your toes.
- Push back up through your heels to complete the move.



1b. DUMBBELL LUNGE

Reps 8 each side / Tempo 2010 / Rest 0 secs

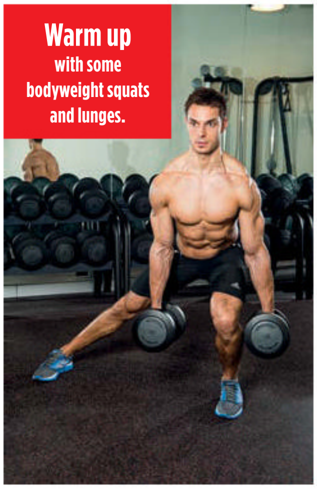
- Stand tall holding a dumbbell in each hand.
- Take a big step forwards with one leg and lunge down until both knees are bent at 90˚.
- Push back off your front foot to return to the starting position, then repeat with the other leg.



1c. DUMBBELL SIDE LUNGE

Reps 8 each side / Tempo 2010 / Rest 0 secs

- Stand tall with your feet close together, holding a dumbbell in each hand.
- Keeping your core braced and your head looking forwards, take a big step to one side and lower your body towards the leading leg.
- Push back off the leading leg and repeat on the other side.

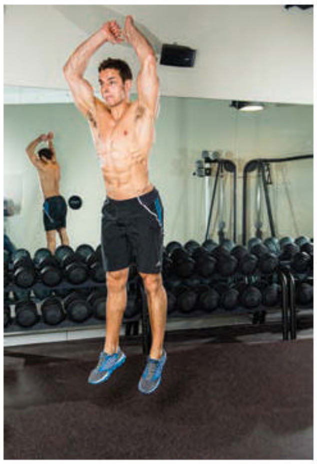


Warm up
with some bodyweight squats and lunges.

1d. JUMP SQUAT

Reps 15 / Tempo 1010 / Rest 3 mins

- Stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart and your core braced.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor, keeping your knees in line with your toes, then push off the ground explosively ßso both feet leave the floor.
- As you land, descend into another squat and repeat.

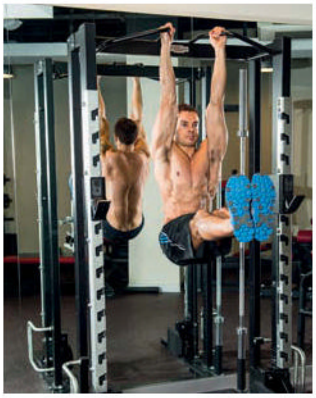


Giant set 2

2a. HANGING LEG RAISE

Reps 10 / Tempo 2110 / Rest 0 secs

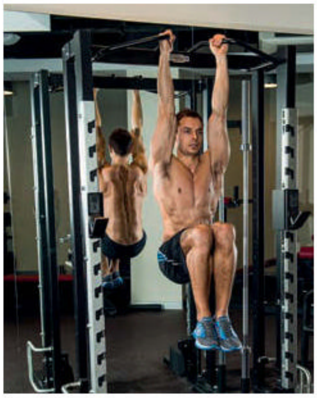
- Hang from a bar with your body straight.
- Keeping your legs straight, use your lower abs to raise them until they are parallel to the ground.



2b. HANGING KNEE RAISE

Reps 15 / Tempo 2110 / Rest 0 secs

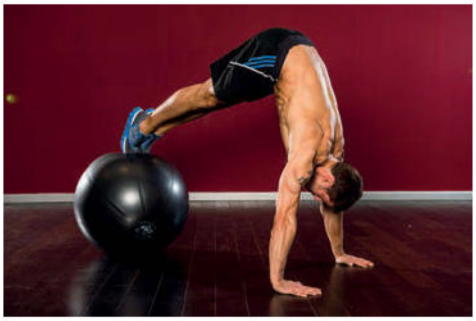
- Hang from a bar with your knees bent.
- Keeping them bent, use your lower abs to raise them until they are above waist height.



2c. GYM BALL PIKE

Reps 8 / Tempo 1111 / Rest 0 secs

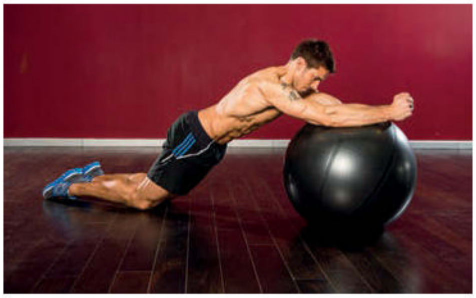
- Start in a plank position with your feet on a gym ball.
- Keeping your legs straight, use your abs to draw your feet towards your hands, until your body forms a V-shape.
- Return to the start.



2d. GYM BALL ROLL-OUT

Reps 8 / Tempo 1111 / Rest 3 mins

- Start on your knees with your elbows bent and your forearms resting on the ball.
- Slowly roll the ball away from your body, keeping your core braced.
- Once your torso is parallel to the ground, contract your abs to roll the ball back to the start.



Warm up

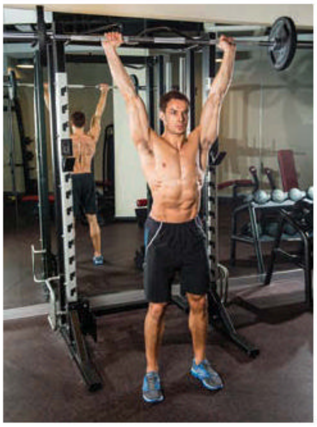
with some empty-bar shoulder presses and EZ-bar biceps curls, gradually increasing the weight and decreasing the reps until you reach your work-set target weight.

Giant set 1

1a. OVERHEAD PRESS

Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 /
Rest 0 secs

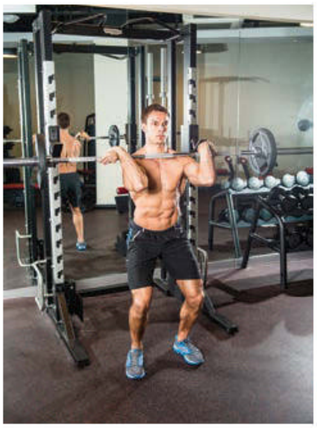
- With your feet placed shoulder-width apart and your hands just wider, hold a bar on your upper chest.
- Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.
- Press the bar up until your arms are extended overhead.
- Keep your core braced during the lift and make sure you don't tilt your hips forwards.
- Lower the bar back to your chest and repeat.



1b. PUSH PRESS

Reps 8 / Tempo 2010 /
Rest 0 secs

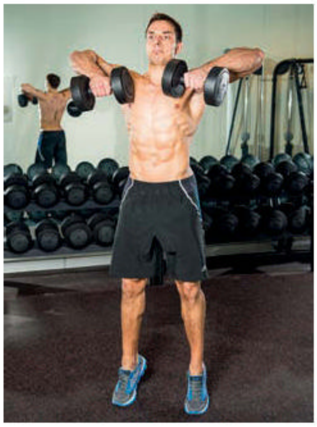
- With your feet shoulder-width apart and hands just wider, hold a bar on your upper chest.
- Keep your chest upright and your core braced.
- Bend at the knees to go into a quarter-squat, then stand straight and press the bar up, to extend your arms overhead.
- Keep your core braced and don't tilt your hips forwards.
- Lower the bar back to your chest with control.



1c. DUMBBELL HIGH PULL

reps 12 / Tempo 2010 /
Rest 0 secs

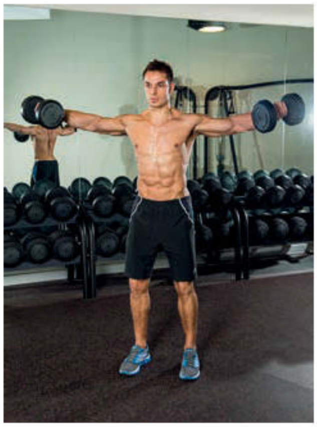
- Stand up tall holding a dumbbell in each hand with an overhand grip.
- Drop into a half-squat, then stand up powerfully and go onto your toes while pulling the weights up, leading with your elbows, until your hands are level with top of your chest.
- Lower the weights back to the start.



1d. DUMBBELL LATERAL RAISE

Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 /
Rest 3 mins

- Stand tall with your core braced and your feet apart, holding a light dumbbell in each hand by your sides, with your palms facing one another.
- Leading with your elbows, raise the weights out to the sides, using your muscles and not momentum.
- Stop at shoulder height, then slowly return to the start.

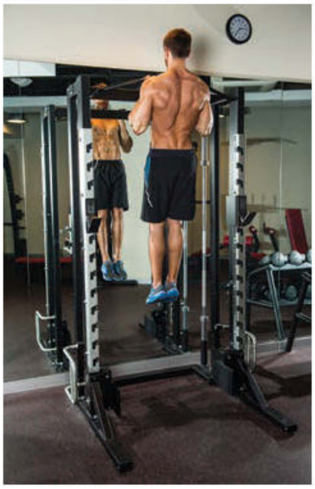


Giant set 2

2a. CHIN-UP

Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 /
Rest 0 secs

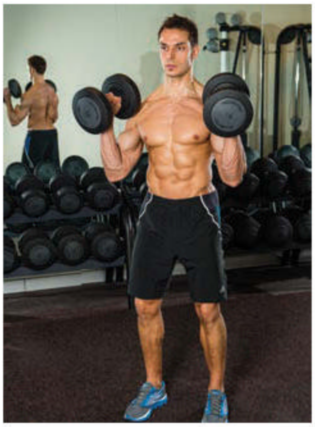
- Grab the bar with an underhand grip, with your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended.
- Squeezing your lats together, pull yourself up.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, lower yourself back to the start.



2b. DUMBBELL HAMMER CURL

Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 /
Rest 0 secs

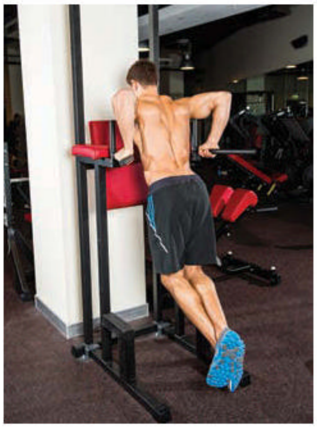
- Hold a dumbbell in each hand, with your palms facing each other.
- Keeping your elbows close to your sides, raise both weights to shoulder height, squeezing your biceps at the top of the move.
- Slowly return the weights to the start.



2c. TRICEPS DIP

Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 /
Rest 0 secs

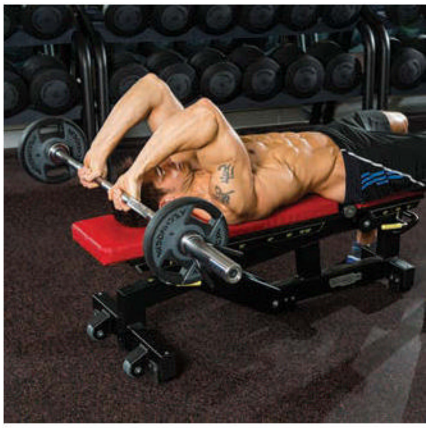
- Grip parallel bars, keeping your body upright.
- With your elbows pointing straight back, lower your body as far as you can comfortably go, without stressing your shoulders.
- Keep your core braced and don't swing your legs for momentum.
- Press back up powerfully, without locking out your elbows at the top.



2d. LYING EZ-BAR TRICEPS EXTENSION

Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 /
Rest 3 mins

- Lie on a bench, holding an EZ-bar straight above you.
- Lower the bar towards the top of your head by bending your elbows, which should stay pointing directly up.
- Without arching your back, slowly return the bar to the start position by straightening your arms.



MONTH 3 WORKOUT 1

Full body

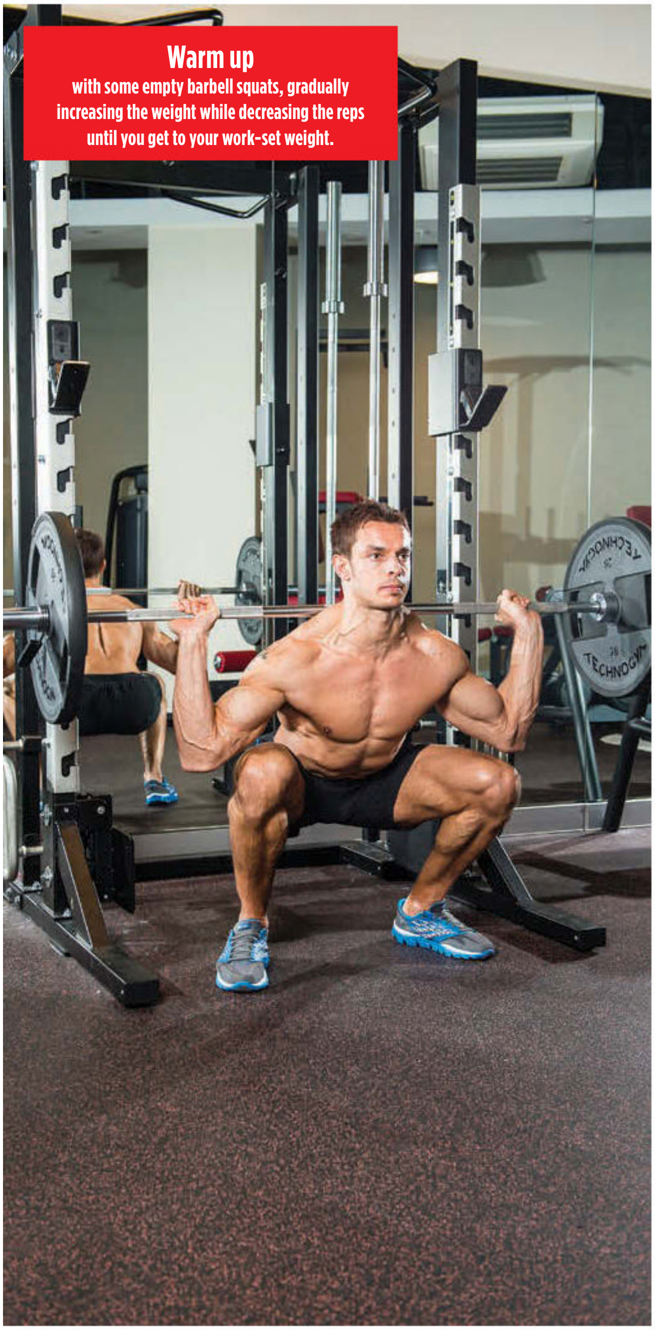
Each of the three weekly sessions this month will push your muscles to their limit, for a leaner look

Superset 1

1a. SQUAT

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- Rest the bar on the back of your shoulders – not on your neck – holding it with an overhand grip slightly wider than your shoulders. Keep your elbows pointing down.
- Your feet should be just wider than shoulder-width apart, with your toes pointing outwards slightly.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive back up through your heels.

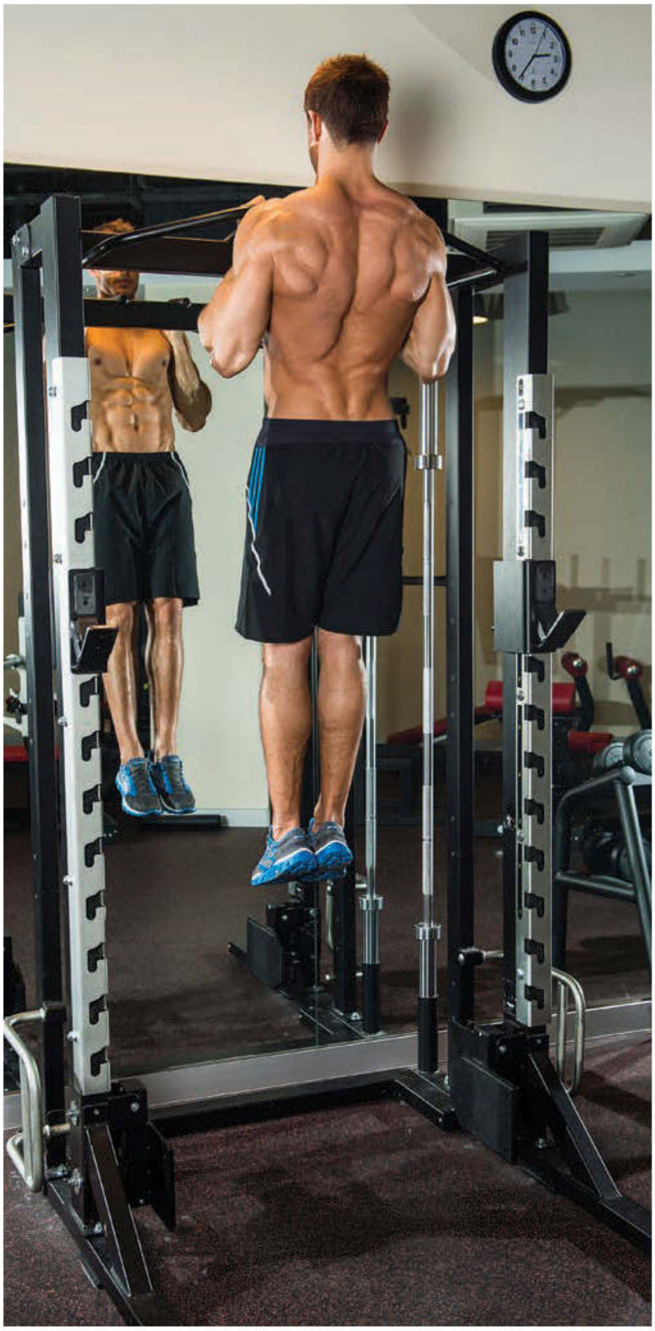


Warm up with some empty barbell squats, gradually increasing the weight while decreasing the reps until you get to your work-set weight.

1b. CHIN-UP

Sets 3 / Reps 8 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- Hold the bar with an underhand grip, with your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended.
- Pull yourself up by squeezing your lats together.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, lower yourself back to the start.

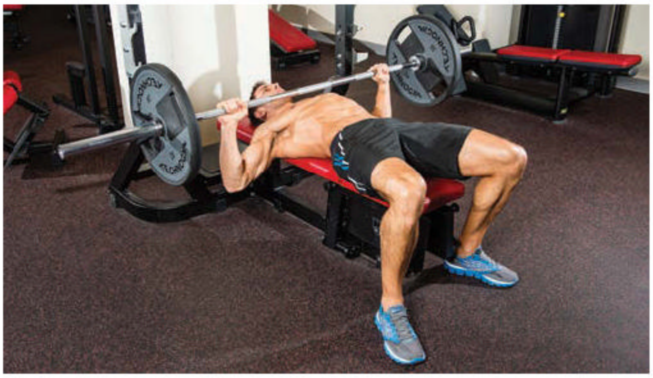


Superset 2

2a. BENCH PRESS

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

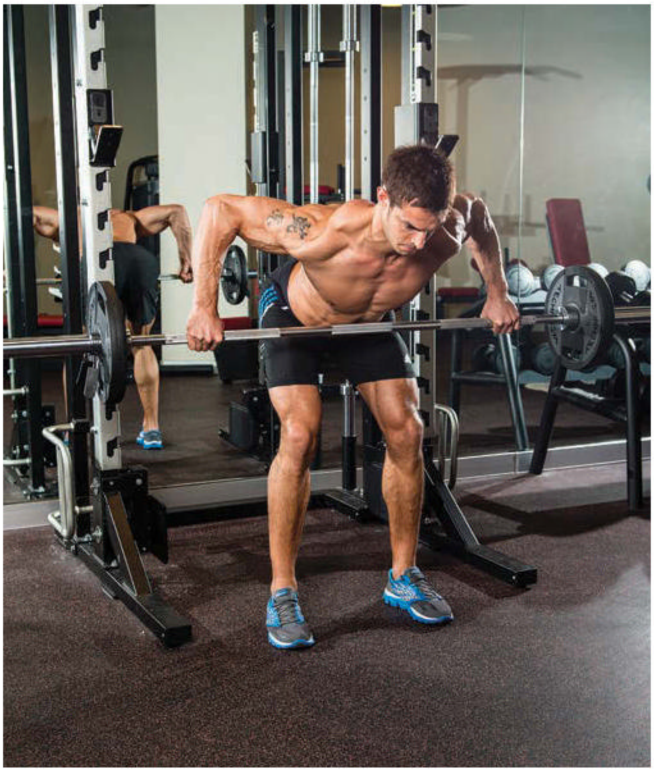
- Lie on a bench with your feet on the floor, directly underneath your knees.
- Hold the bar with an overhand grip, hands shoulder-width apart.
- Lower the bar to your chest, until it's just above your nipples.
- Drive your feet into the floor and push the bar back to the start.



2b. BENT-OVER ROW

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- Bend your knees slightly and lean forwards from the hips. Grip the bar with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart, letting it hang at knee level.
- Pull the bar up to your lower sternum, retracting your shoulder blades to bring the bar up to your chest, then lower again.

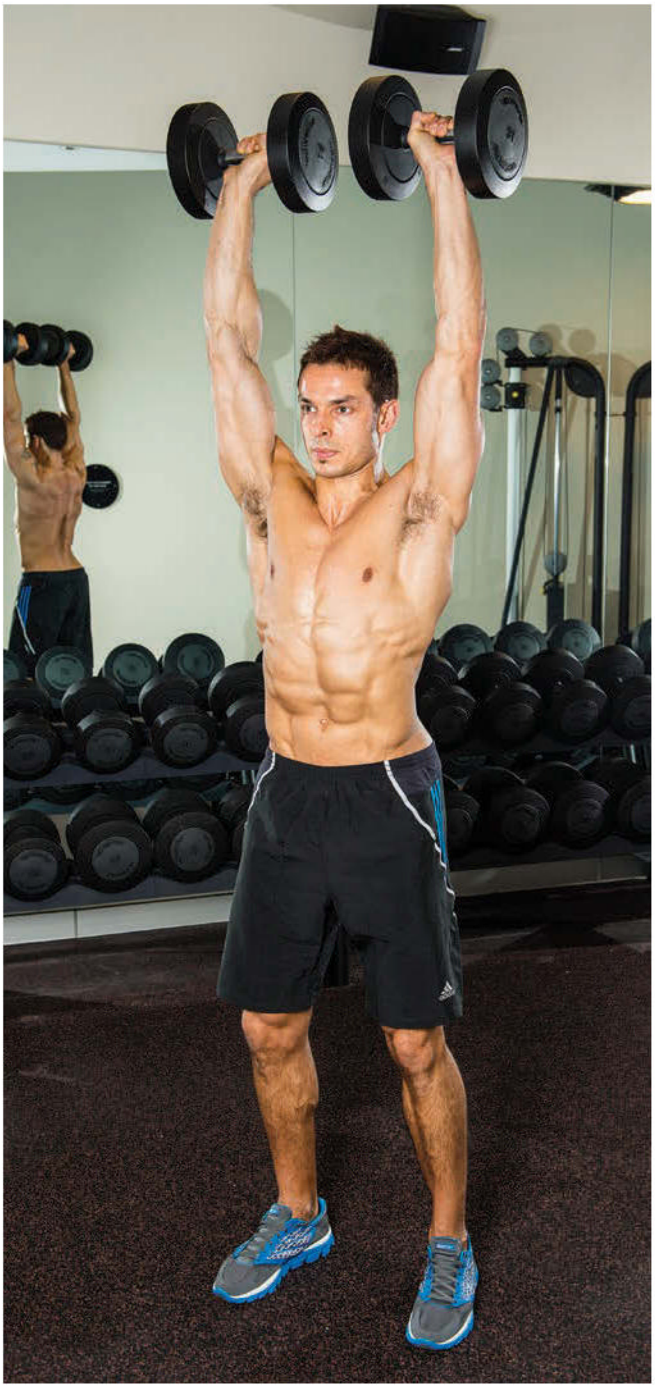


Final move

3. DUMBBELL OVERHEAD PRESS

Sets 3 / Reps 15 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

- With your feet shoulder-width apart, hold a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height.
- Brace your core, keep your chest upright and press the weights upwards, until your arms are extended overhead.
- Lower the dumbbells back to your shoulders to return to the start.



MONTH 3 WORKOUT 2
Full body

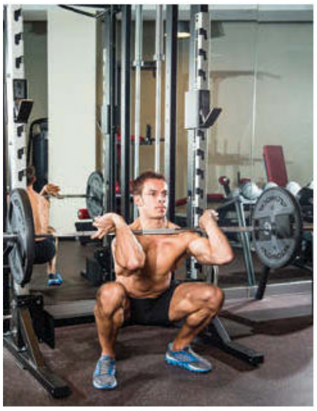
Superset 1

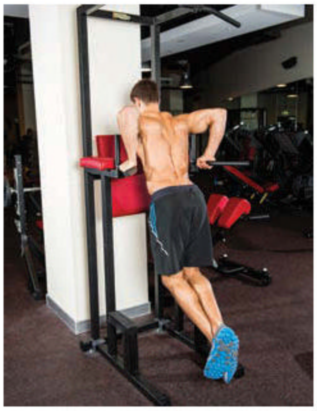
1a. FRONT SQUAT
Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- Rest the bar across the front of your shoulders, with your elbows pointing forwards and your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Maintain a natural arch in your back and keep your core braced throughout.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive back up through your heels.

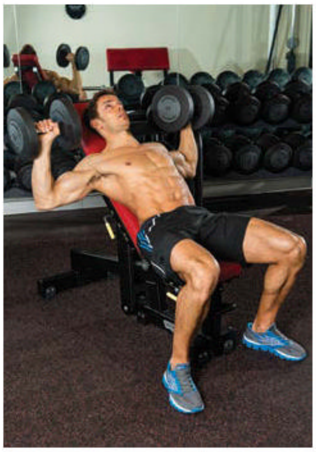
1b. TRICEPS DIP
Sets 3 / Reps 8 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- Grip parallel bars, keeping your body upright.
- With your elbows pointing straight back, lower your body as far as you can comfortably go, without stressing your shoulders. Keep your core braced and make sure you don't swing your legs for momentum.
- Press back up powerfully, but don't lock out your elbows at the top.



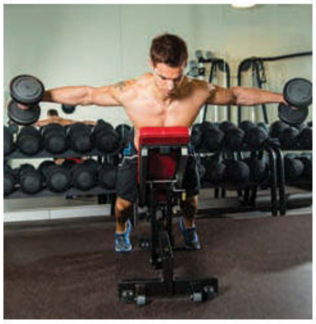


Superset 2



2a. INCLINE DUMBBELL BENCH PRESS
Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- Lie on a bench set at a 45° angle, holding dumbbells with an overhand grip.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor and your back against the bench.
- Lower the weights to your chest, flaring your elbows out to the sides.
- Press the weights above your head, but don't lock out your elbows at the top.



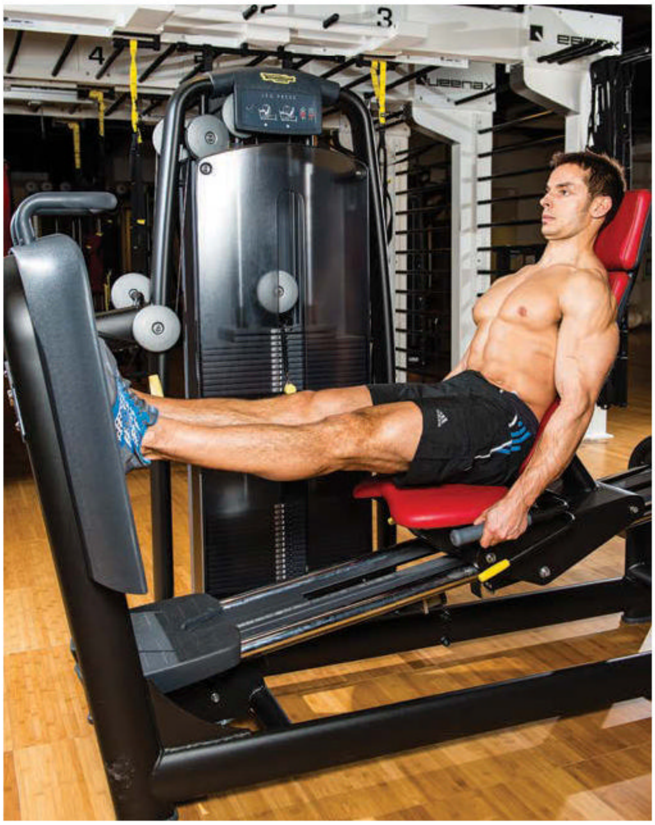
2b. INCLINE DUMBBELL REVERSE FLYE
Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- Lie face-down on an incline bench, holding a dumbbell in each hand.
- Keep your chest on the bench and lift the weights up and out to the sides, leading with your elbows.
- Slowly return to the start.

Final move

3. LEG PRESS
Sets 3 /Reps 25 / Tempo 1010 / Rest 60 secs

- Sit on the leg press machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- Release the lock and push through your heels to straighten your legs.
- Bend your legs to return slowly to the start.



Warm up

with some empty barbell front squats, gradually increasing the weight while decreasing the reps until you get to your work-set weight.

MONTH 3 WORKOUT 3

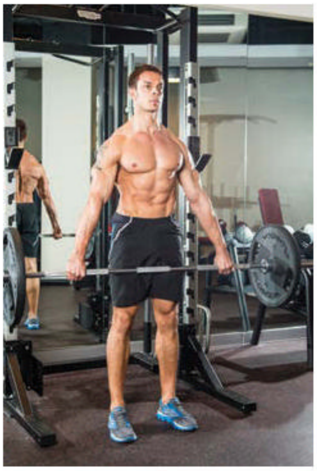
Full body

Superset 1

1a. DEADLIFT

Sets 4 / Reps 10 / Tempo 1010 / Rest 45 secs

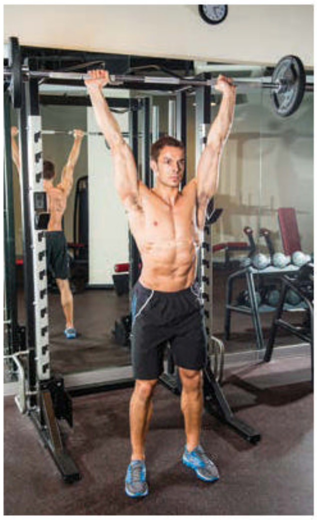
- Squat and grip a barbell with either an overhand or alternate grip outside your knees.
- Keeping your core braced and shoulders retracted, use your glutes to power the initial lift, pushing down through your heels.
- Keep the bar close to your body and, as it passes your knees, push your hips forwards. Keep your shoulders back throughout the move.
- Reverse the movement back to the start.



1b. PUSH PRESS

Sets 4 / Reps 10 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- With your feet shoulder-width apart, position a bar on your upper chest, gripping it with your hands slightly more than shoulder-width apart.
- Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.
- Bend at the knees to go into a quarter-squat, then stand up and press the bar directly upwards, until your arms are extended overhead.
- Lower the bar back to your chest to return to the start.

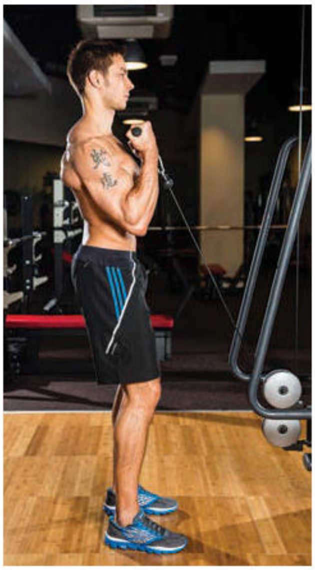


Superset 2

2a. CABLE BICEPS CURL

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

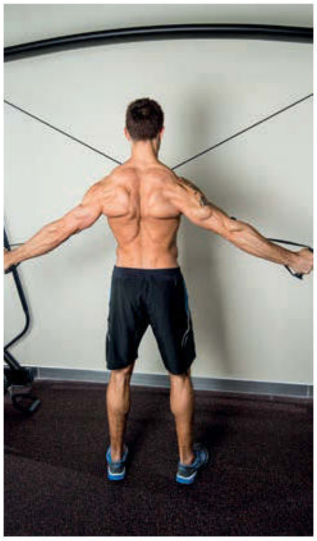
- Stand up tall, holding a double-rope cable handle attached to the low pulley of a cable machine.
- Keeping your elbows next to your body, curl your hands up to bring the handles towards your chin.
- At the top of the move, squeeze your biceps then return to the start, squeezing your triceps at the bottom.



2b. STANDING CABLE REVERSE FLYE

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 45 secs

- Stand in the middle of a cable machine with your arms crossed, holding a D-handle attached to the high pulley in each hand at shoulder height.
- Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, pull both handles across your body and down, until your arms are extended and your shoulder blades are retracted.
- Return to the start, keeping the weight under control.

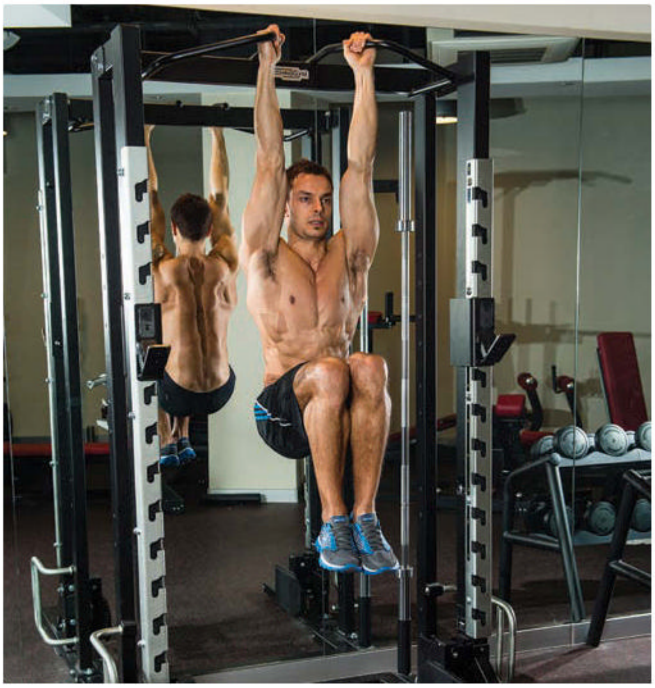


Final move

3. HANGING KNEE RAISE

Sets 3 / Reps 15 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

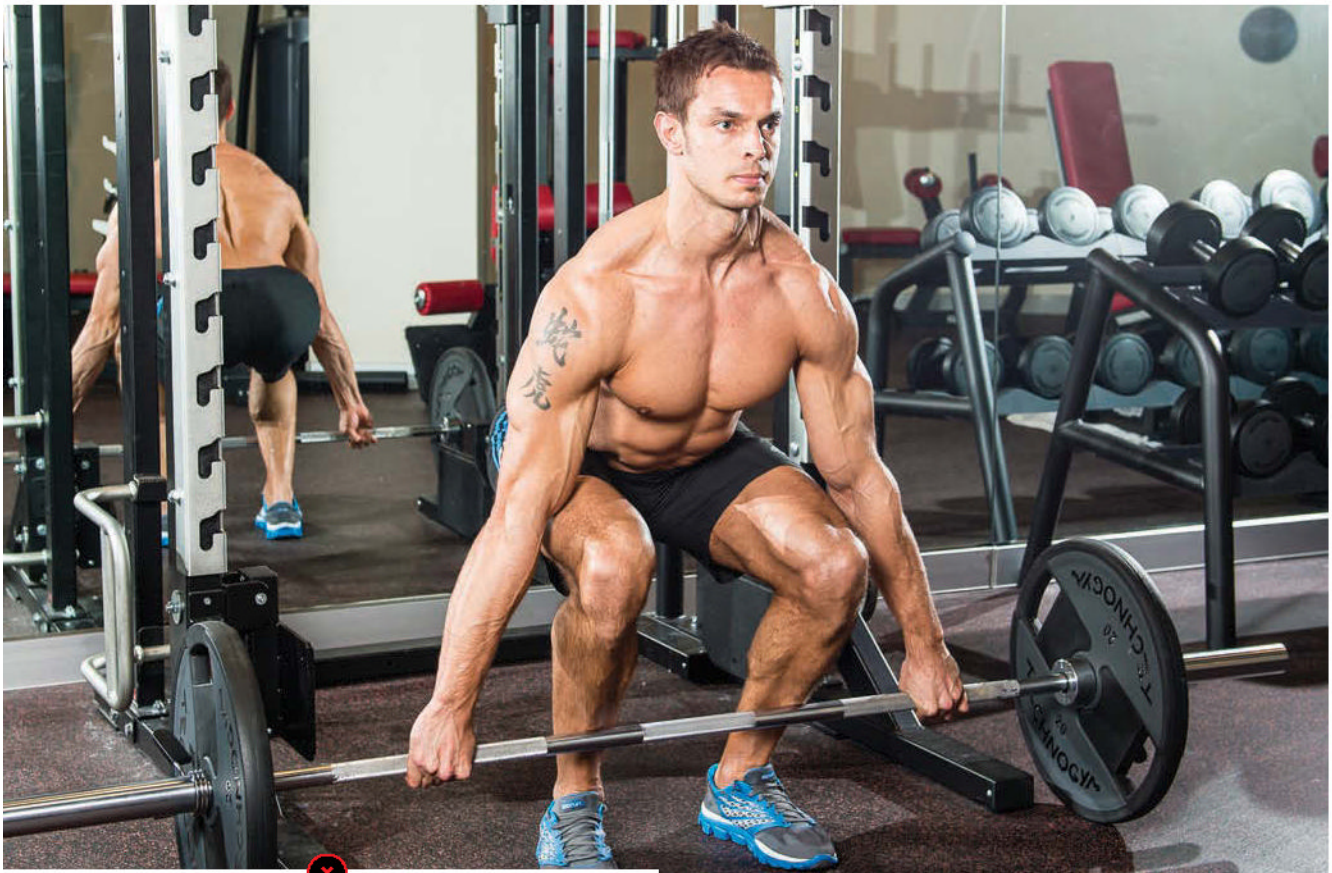
- Hang from a bar using an overhand grip, with your knees bent.
- Use your lower abs to raise your legs until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Return to the start.

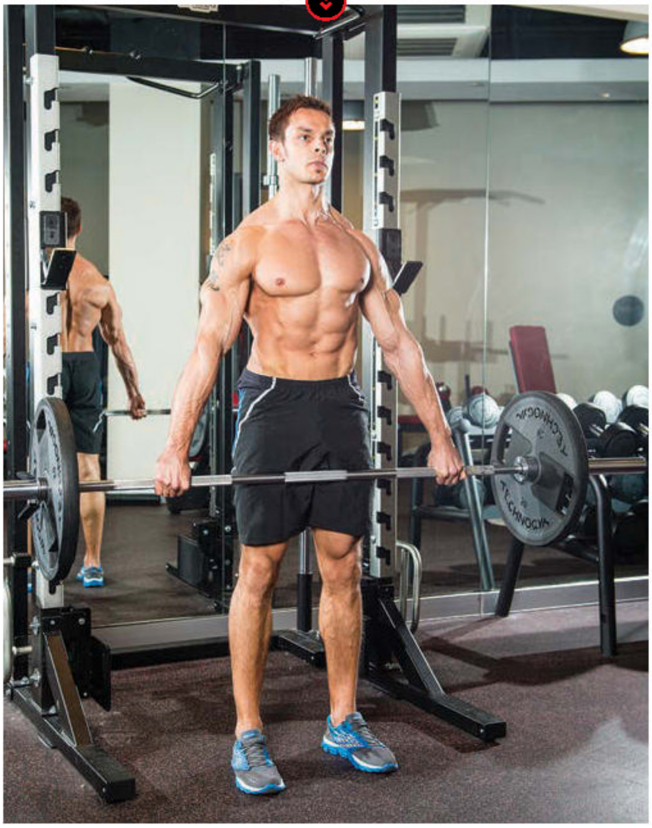


MONTH 4 WORKOUT 1

Legs

Each of this month's three weekly workouts includes five moves, to build a stronger, leaner body that's more able to stay free from injury





Warm up with some light barbell deadlifts and squats, gradually increasing the weight while decreasing the reps until you get to your work-set weight.

1. SNATCH-GRIP DEADLIFT

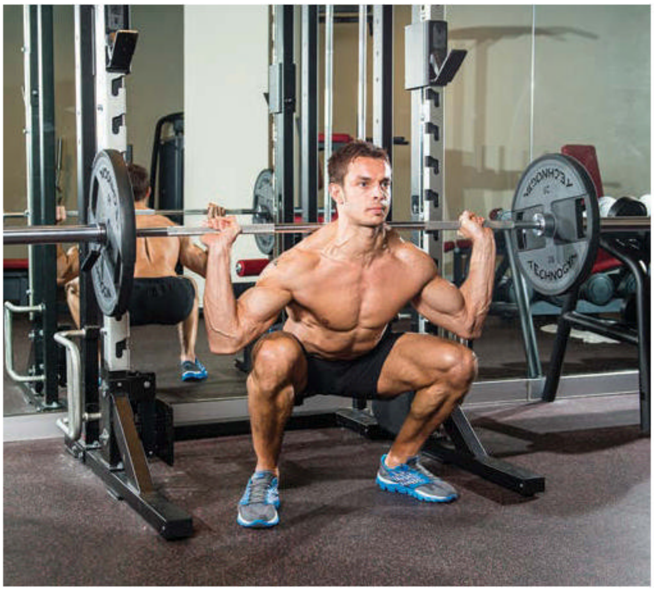
Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 1010 / Rest 90 secs

- Stand in front of a barbell and squat to grasp the bar with a wide overhand or alternate grip.
- Brace your core, retract your shoulders and use your glutes to power the initial lift, pushing down through your heels.
- Keep the bar close to your body and, as it passes your knees, push your hips forwards.
- Reverse the move to return to the start.

2. SQUAT

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 1010 / Rest 90 secs

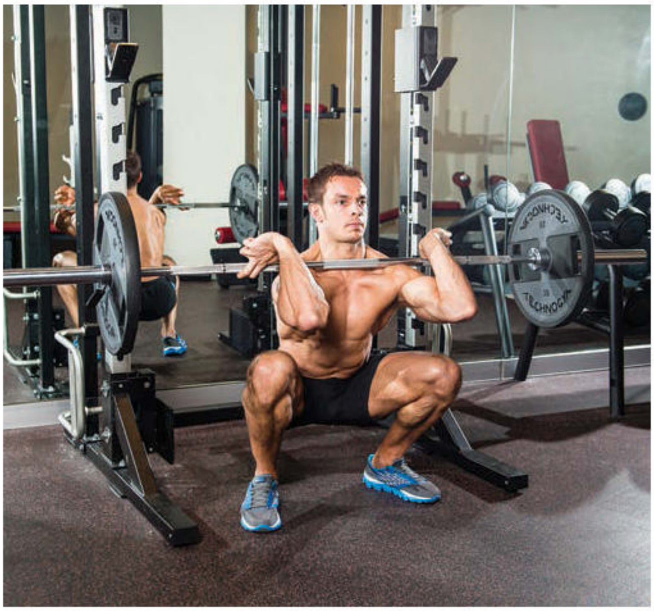
- Rest the bar on the back of your shoulders, holding it with an overhand grip. Keep your elbows pointing down.
- Your feet should be just wider than shoulder-width apart, with your toes pointing outwards slightly.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor.
- Drive up through your heels.



3. FRONT SQUAT

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 1010 / Rest 90 secs

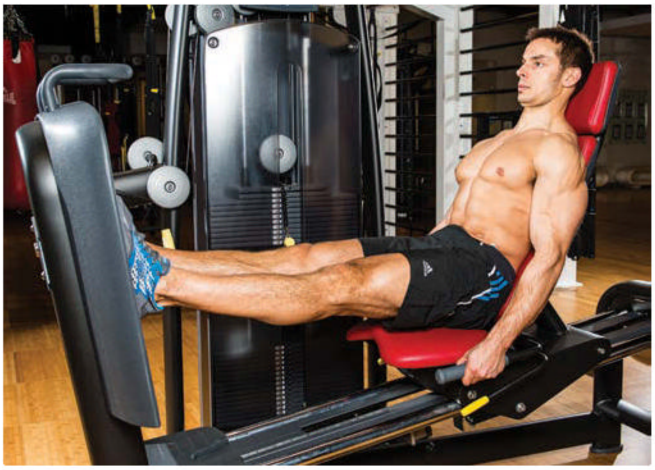
- Balance the bar on the front of your shoulders, with your elbows pointing forwards and your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive back up through your heels.



4. LEG PRESS

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 1010 / Rest 90 secs

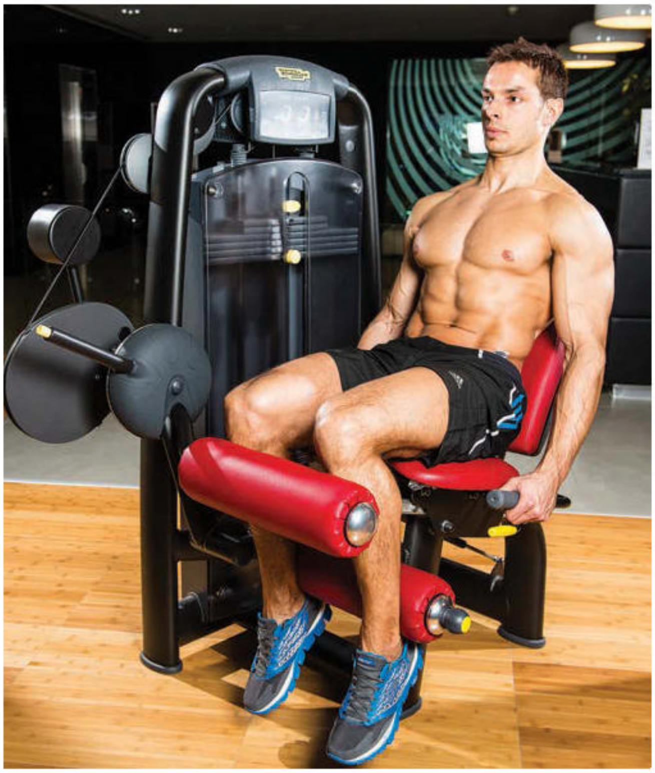
- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- Release the lock, then push through your heels to push yourself away from the platform.
- Pause briefly at the top, then bend your knees to return to the start.



5. SEATED HAMSTRING CURL

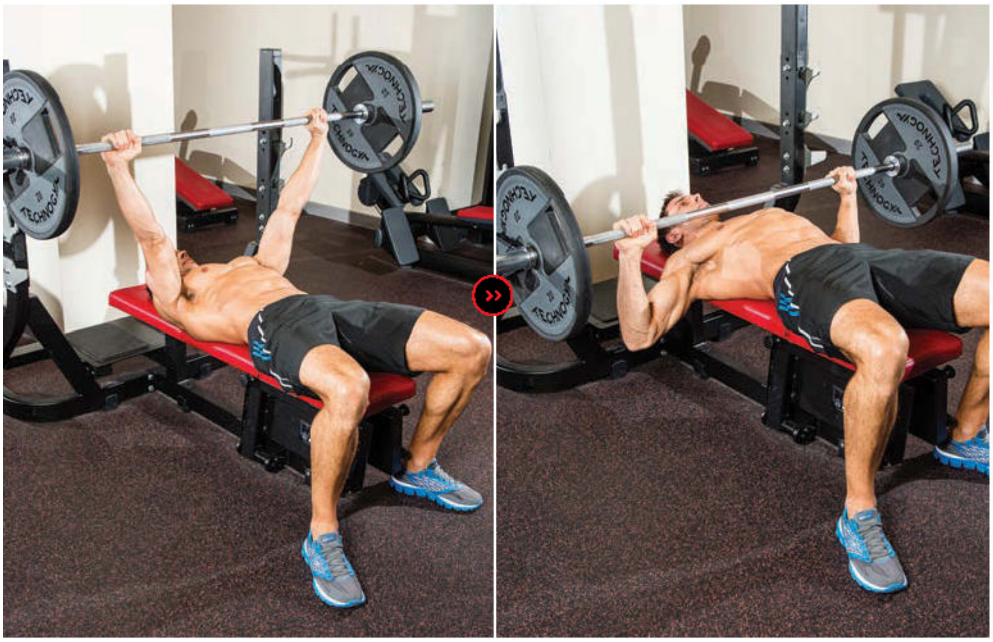
Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- With the pad against the back of your lower calves, lower it by contracting your hamstrings.
- Return slowly to the start.



MONTH 4 WORKOUT 2

Chest and back

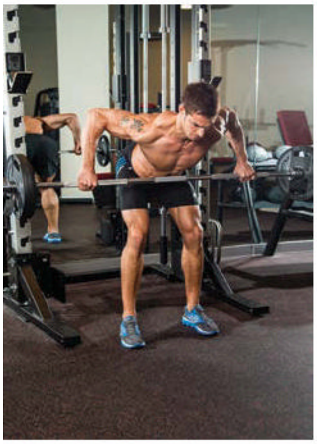


Warm up
with some light bench presses and bent-over rows, gradually increasing the weight while decreasing the reps until you get to your work-set weight.

1. BENCH PRESS

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Lie on the bench with your feet on the floor directly under your knees.
- Hold the bar with an overhand grip, with your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Slowly lower the bar to your chest, taking your elbows out to 90°, until the bar is almost touching your nipples.
- Drive your feet into the floor and push the bar back up strongly, reversing the movement back to the start.



2. BENT OVER ROW

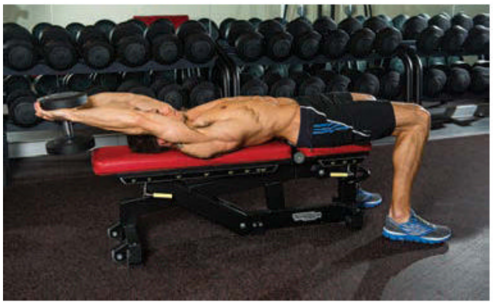
Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Start with your core braced and your back straight, gripping the bar with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Bend your knees slightly and lean forwards from the hips, letting the bar hang at knee level.
- Pull the bar up to your lower sternum, retracting your shoulder blades to allow the bar to come up to your chest, then lower the bar back to the start.

3. DUMBBELL PULL-OVER

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

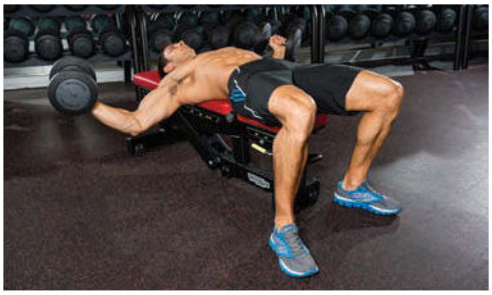
- Lie flat on a bench with your head and shoulders supported, and your feet flat on the floor.
- Hold a single dumbbell with both hands above your chest and engage your core.
- Slowly lower the weight behind your head, keeping a slight bend in your elbows.
- Use your pecs to pull your arms back over your head, to return to the start.



4. DUMBBELL FLYE

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

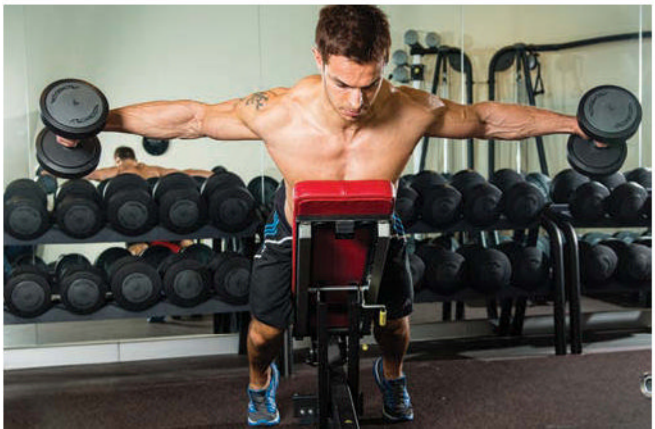
- Lie on a flat bench with your feet flat on the floor, holding a dumbbell in each hand above your chest, palms facing.
- Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, slowly lower the weights out to the sides as far as is comfortable.
- Reverse the move, lifting the weights back to the top.

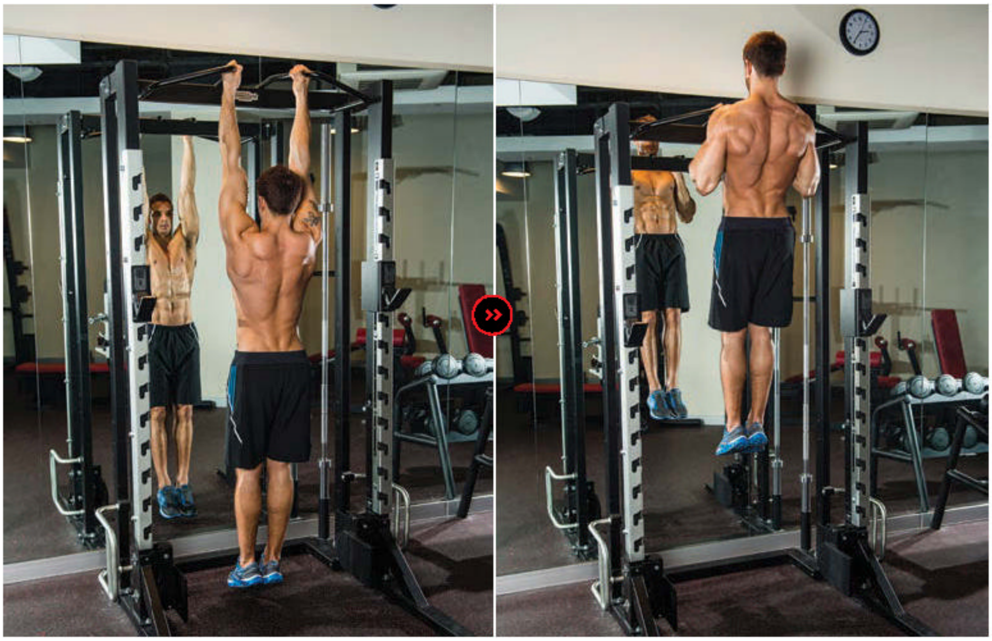


5. INCLINE DUMBBELL REVERSE FLYE

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Lie chest-down on an incline bench, holding a dumbbell in each hand.
- Keeping your chest on the bench, lift the weights out to the sides, leading with your elbows.
- Stop when your arms are parallel to the floor and slowly return to the start.





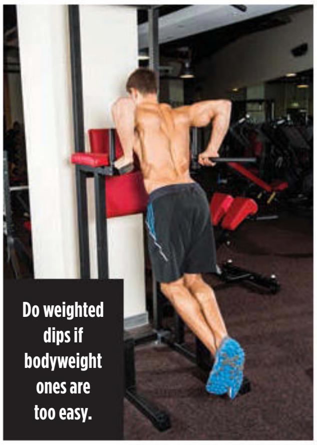
Warm up
with some underhand lat pull-downs and triceps press-downs.

Do weighted chin-ups if bodyweight ones are too easy.

1. CHIN-UP

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Grasp the bar using an underhand grip, with your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended.
- Squeeze your lats together and pull yourself up.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, lower yourself back to the start.



Do weighted dips if bodyweight ones are too easy.

2. TRICEPS DIP

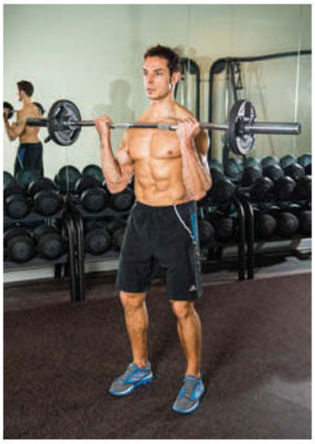
Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Grip parallel bars, keeping your body upright.
- With your elbows pointing straight back, lower your body as far as you can comfortably go, without stressing your shoulders.
- Keep your core braced and make sure you don't swing your legs for momentum.
- Press back up powerfully, but don't lock out your elbows at the top.

3. PUSH PRESS

Sets 5 / Reps 5 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, holding a bar on your upper chest with your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.
- Bend your knees to go into a quarter-squat, then stand up straight and press the bar directly upwards, until your arms are extended overhead.
- Lower the bar back down to your chest.



4. EZ-BAR BICEPS CURL

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Stand with your shoulders back and your feet close together, holding an EZ-bar with an underhand grip.
- Keeping your elbows tucked in, curl the bar up, stopping just before your forearms are vertical.
- Lower back down slowly to the start.
- Avoid rocking to generate momentum, because this takes the emphasis away from the biceps.

5. LYING EZ-BAR TRICEPS EXTENSION

Sets 3 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Lie on a bench, holding an EZ-bar straight above you.
- Slowly lower the bar towards the top of your head. Try to keep your upper arms fixed in place, because the movement should be in your forearms.
- Without arching your back, slowly return the bar to the start by straightening your arms.

MONTH 5 WORKOUT 1

Full body

These three workouts use supersets to keep your heart rate up, so you blast fat more effectively

Superset 1

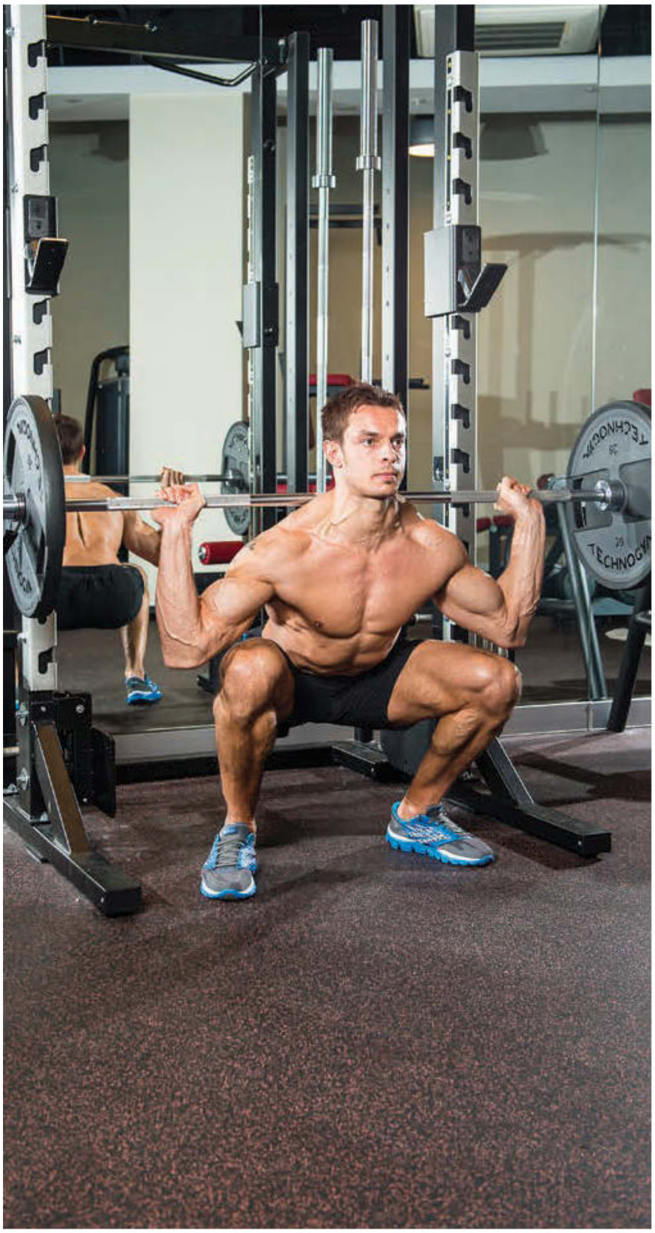
1a. SQUAT

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 10 secs

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your toes pointing outwards slightly. Rest the bar on the back of your shoulders and hold it with an overhand grip, with your elbows pointing to the floor.
- Squat down, keeping your chest up, until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive back up through your heels to return to the start.

Warm up

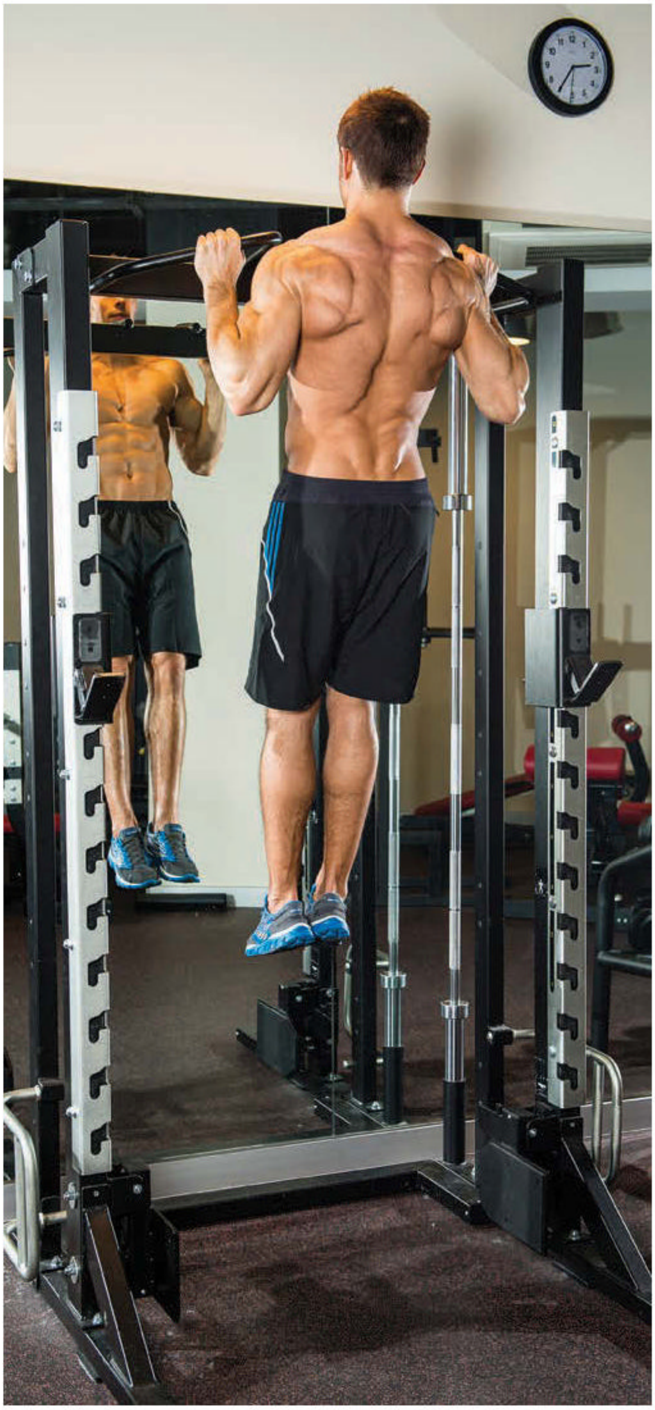
with some light barbell squats, gradually increasing the weight while decreasing the reps until you get to your work-set weight.



1b. PULL-UP

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended, holding the bar with an overhand grip, shoulder-width apart.
- Squeeze your lats together to pull yourself up.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, return to the start.

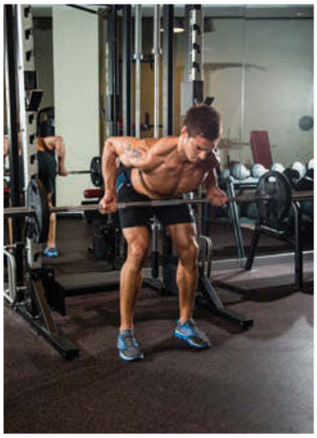


Superset 2

2a. REVERSE-GRIP BENT-OVER ROW

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 10 secs

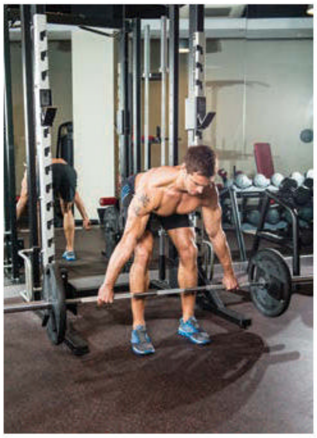
- With your core braced, your back straight and your shoulder blades retracted, bend your knees slightly and lean forwards from the hips.
- Grasp the bar with an underhand grip just wider than shoulder-width, letting it hang at knee level.
- Pull the bar up to your chest, retracting your shoulder blades, then lower the bar slowly to the start.



2b. STRAIGHT-LEG ROMANIAN DEADLIFT

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Stand tall, holding a barbell with an overhand grip.
- Keeping your legs straight, lean forwards from your hips and lower the bar down the front of your legs.
- Reverse the move back to the start.

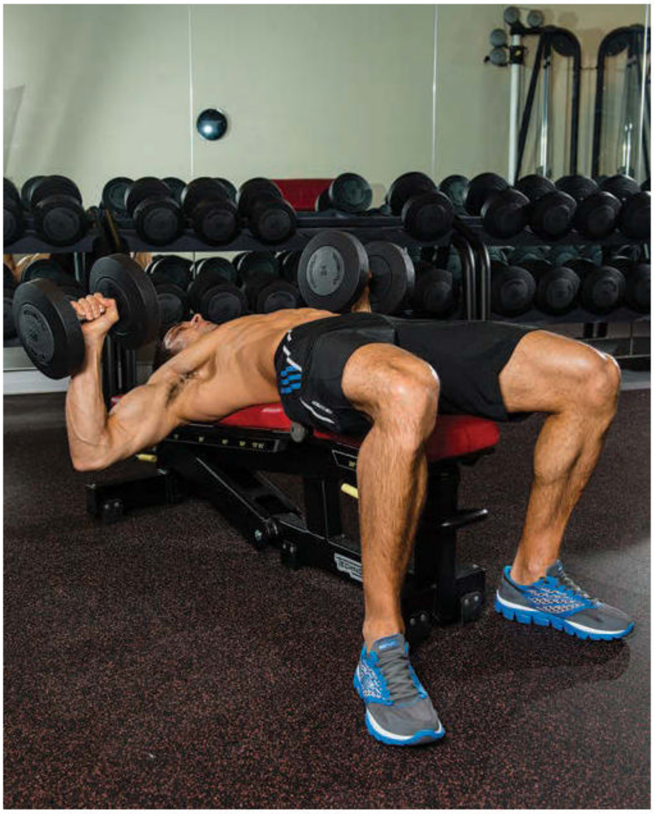


Superset 3

3a. DUMBBELL BENCH PRESS

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 10 secs

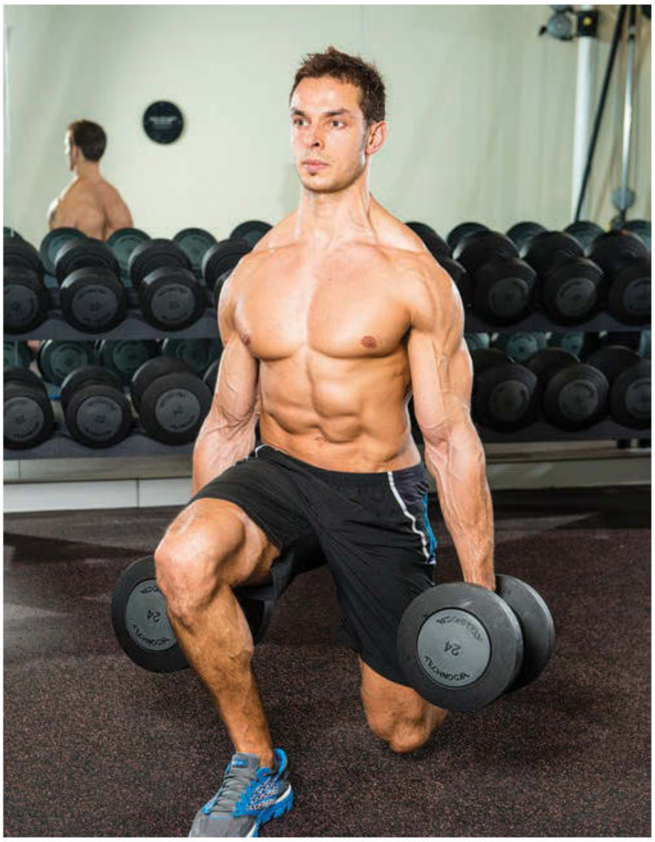
- Lie on a flat bench, holding a dumbbell in each hand.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor, your upper back against the bench and your core braced.
- Press the weights up, but don’t lock out your elbows at the top.
- Slowly lower the weights back to your chest, flaring your elbows out to the side.



3b. DUMBBELL LUNGE

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Stand tall, holding a dumbbell in each hand.
- Keeping your core braced, take a big step forwards with one foot and lunge until both your knees are at 90˚.
- Push off from your front foot to return to the start position.
- Repeat with your other leg to complete one rep.



MONTH 5 WORKOUT 2

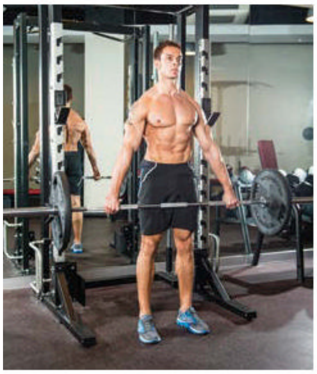
Full body

Superset 1

1a. DEADLIFT

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 10 secs

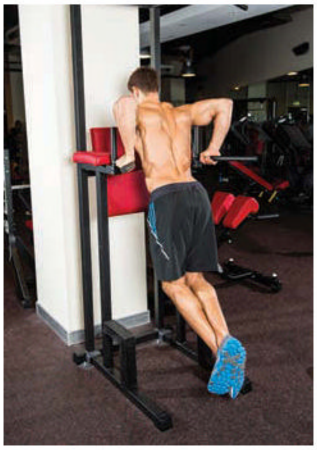
- Stand in front of a barbell and squat to grip the bar with either an overhand or alternate grip just outside your knees.
- Keeping your core braced and your shoulders retracted, push down through your heels and use your glutes to power the initial lift.
- Keep the bar close to your body and, as it passes your knees, push your hips forwards.
- Reverse the movement back to the start.



1b. TRICEPS DIP

Sets4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 90 secs

- Grip parallel bars, keeping your body upright.
- With your elbows pointing straight back, lower your body as far as you can comfortably go, without stressing your shoulders.
- Keep your core braced and make sure you don't swing your legs for momentum.
- Press back up powerfully, but don't lock out your elbows at the top.

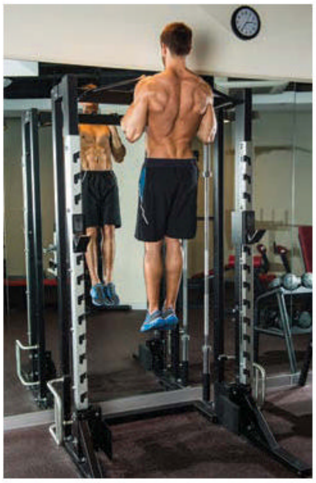


Superset 2

2a. CHIN-UP

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 10 secs

- Grab the bar with an underhand grip, hands shoulder-width apart. Start from a dead hang, with your arms fully extended.
- Pull yourself up by squeezing your lats together.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, lower yourself back to the start.

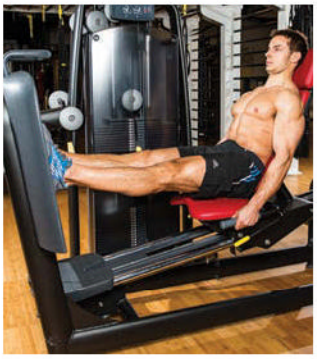


2b. LEG PRESS

Sets 4 / Reps 15 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- Release the lock and push through your heels to straighten your legs.
- Pause briefly at the top, then bend your legs to return slowly to the start.

Warm up with some light barbell deadlifts, gradually increasing the weight while decreasing the reps until you get to your work-set weight.

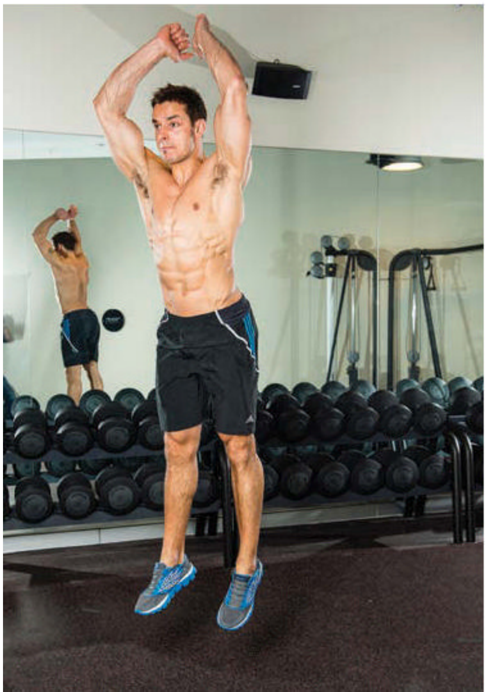


Superset 3

3a. JUMP SQUAT

Sets 4 / Reps 15 / Tempo 1010 / Rest 10 secs

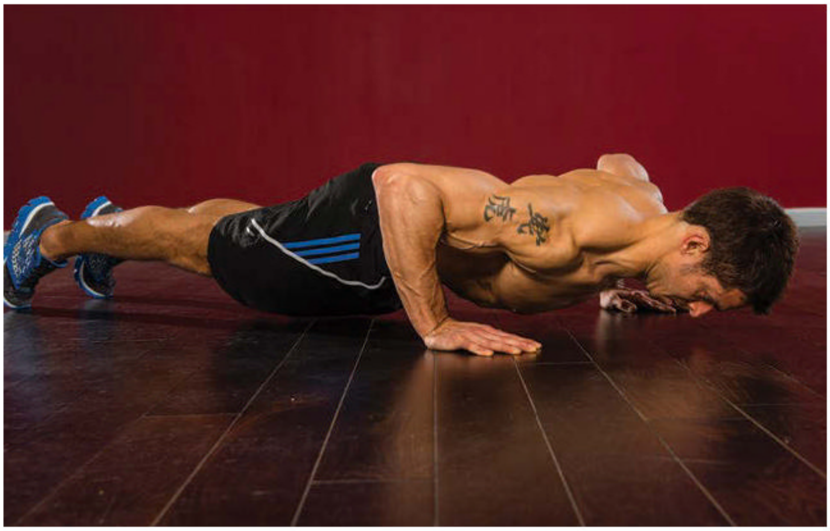
- Stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart and your core braced.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor, keeping your knees in line with your toes, then push off the ground so both feet leave the floor.
- As you land, go straight into the next squat.



3b. PRESS-UP

Sets 4 / Reps 15 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Start with your hands shoulder-width apart and your body straight from head to heels.
- Lower yourself until your elbows reach 90°, then press back up.

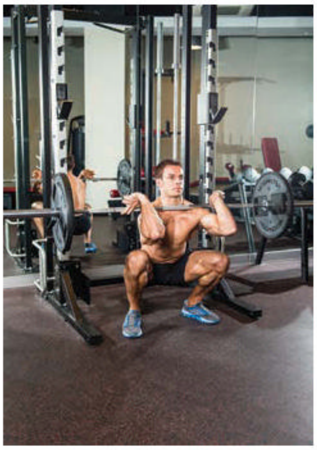


Superset 1

1a. FRONT SQUAT

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 10 secs

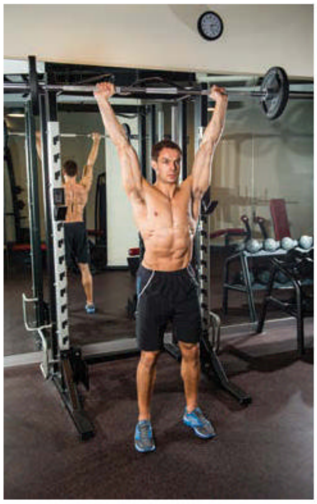
- Rest the bar on the front of your shoulders, with your elbows pointing forwards and your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive back up through your heels to the start.



1b. OVERHEAD PRESS

Sets 4 / Reps 10 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 90 secs

- Rest the bar on the front of your shoulders, gripping it with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Press the bar upwards until your arms are extended overhead, keeping your core braced throughout.
- Lower the bar back to the start position.

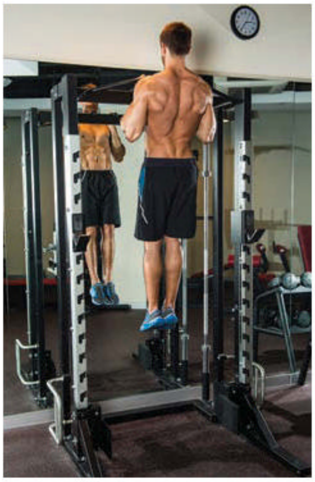


Superset 2

2a. HAMMER-GRIP CHIN-UP

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 10 secs

- Grasp the bar with your palms facing you and your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended.
- Squeeze your lats together, to pull yourself up.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, lower yourself back to the start.



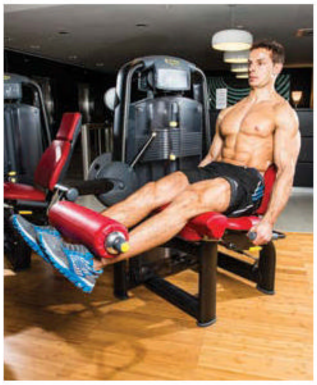
2b. LEG EXTENSION

Sets 4 / Reps 15 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 90 secs

- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- With the pad against the lower part of your shins, straighten your legs to lift it.
- Return to the start.

Warm up

with some light barbell front squats and shoulder presses, gradually increasing the weight while decreasing the reps until you get to your work-set weight.

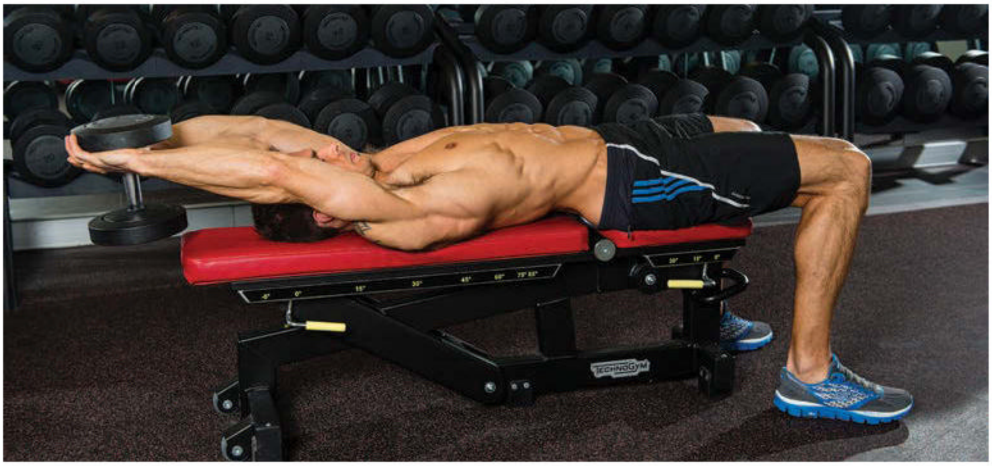


Superset 3

3a. DUMBBELL PULL-OVER

Sets 4 / Reps 10 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 10 secs

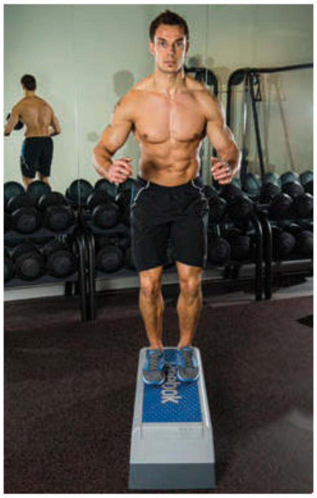
- Lie flat on a bench with your head and shoulders supported, and your feet flat on the floor.
- Hold a single dumbbell with both hands over your chest. Brace your core.
- Keeping only a slight bend in your elbows, lower the weight back behind your head, until you feel a good stretch in your chest.
- Use your pecs to pull your arms back over your head, to return to the start.



3b. BOX JUMP

Sets 4 / Reps 15 / Tempo X / Rest 90 secs

- Stand with your feet either side of a box.
- Drop into a half-squat, then explosively push off from the floor and land with both feet on the box.
- Jump back down to the start position.



MONTH 6 WORKOUT 1

Chest and triceps

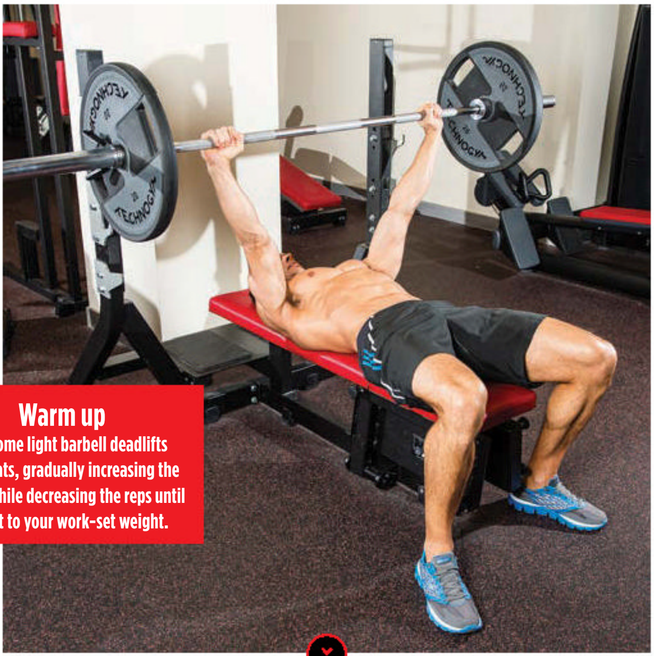
Achieve the V-shaped torso you've always wanted in just four weeks, with this plan that hits your upper body hard

Superset 1

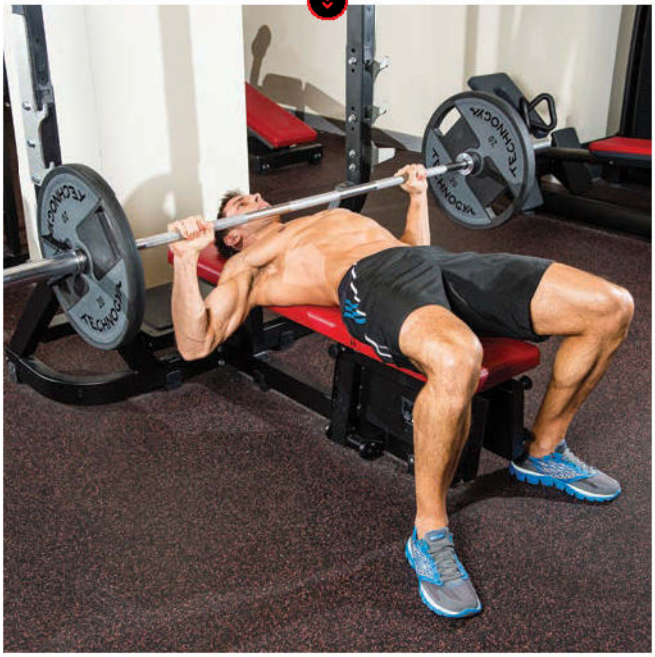
1a. BENCH PRESS

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

- Lie on a flat bench with your feet on the floor directly under your knees.
- Hold the bar with an overhand grip, with your hands wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Lower the bar to your chest, taking your elbows out to 90°, until the bar is almost touching the middle of your chest or is just above your nipples.
- Drive your feet hard into the floor and push the bar strongly to return to the start.



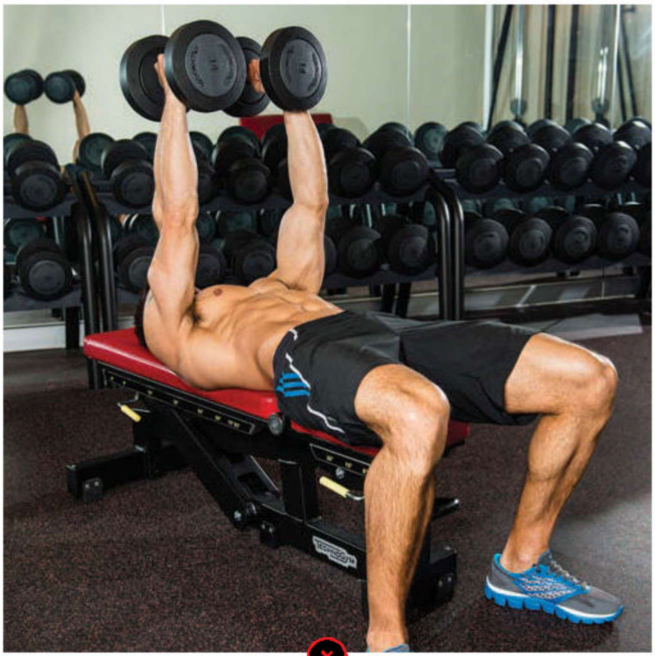
Warm up with some light barbell deadlifts and squats, gradually increasing the weight while decreasing the reps until you get to your work-set weight.

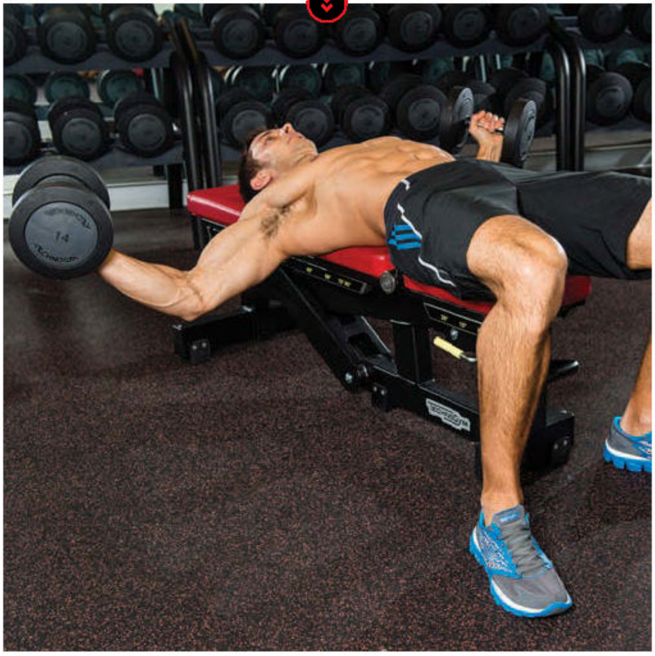


1b. DUMBBELL FLYE

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

- Lie on a flat bench holding a dumbbell in each hand above your chest, with your palms facing.
- Make sure your head and upper back are supported by the bench and your feet are flat on the floor.
- Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, lower the weights out to the side as far as is comfortable.
- Use your chest muscles to reverse the move and raise the weights back to the start.



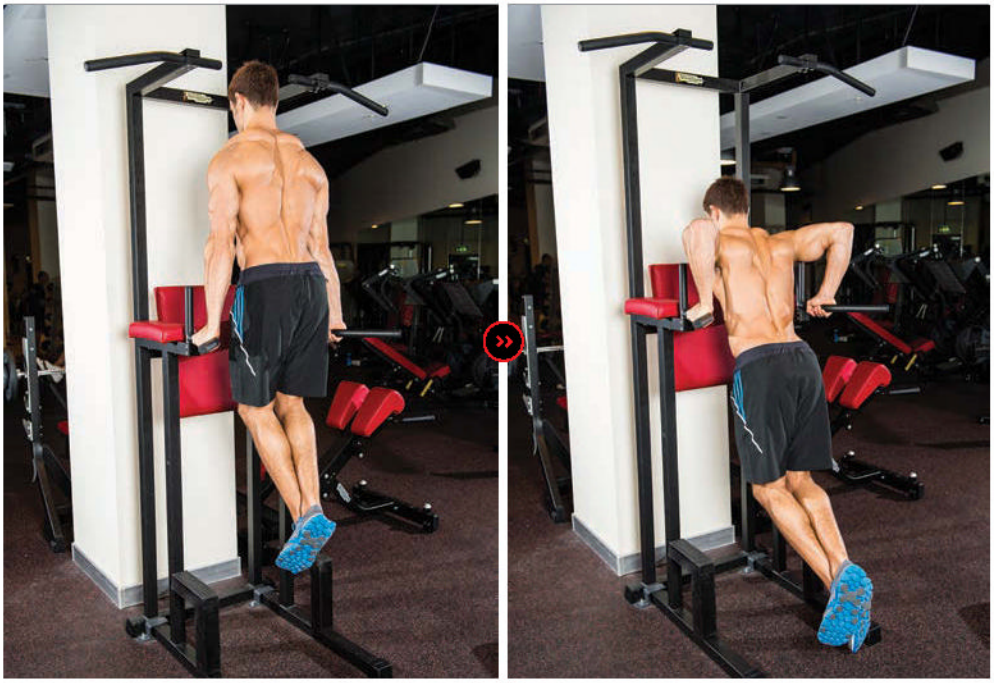


Superset 2

2a. TRICEPS DIP

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

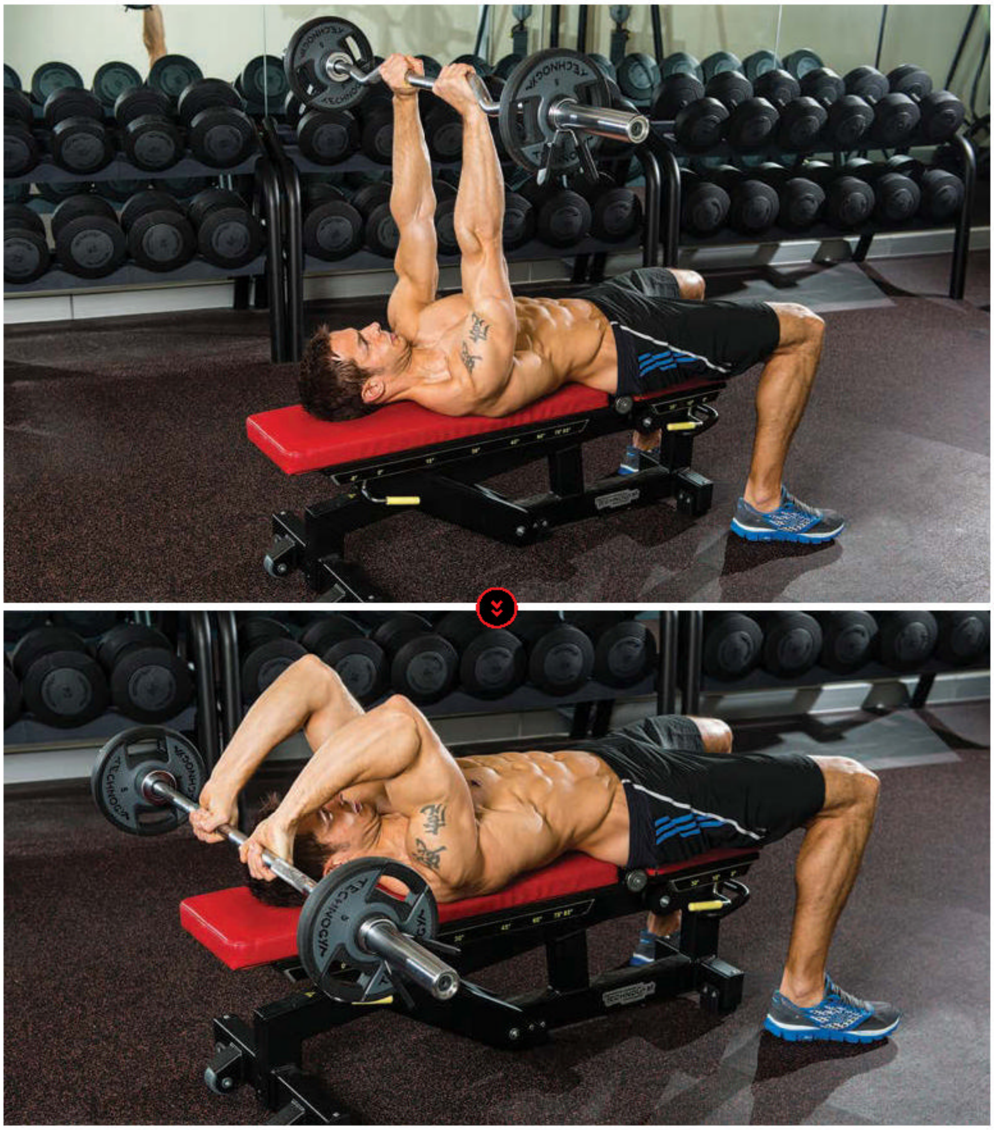
- Grip parallel bars, keeping your body upright.
- With your elbows pointing straight back, lower your body as far as you can go, without stressing your shoulders.
- Keep your core braced and make sure you don't swing your legs for momentum.
- Press back up powerfully, but don't lock out your elbows at the top.



2b. LYING EZ-BAR TRICEPS EXTENSION

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

- Lie on a flat bench, holding an EZ-bar above you with straight arms.
- Lower the bar towards the top of your head by bending your elbows, which should stay pointing to the ceiling.
- Without arching your back, straighten your arms to return the bar to the start.

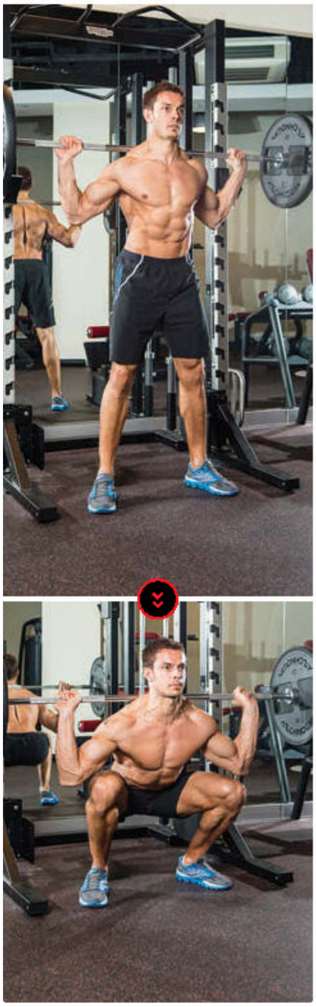


Superset 1

1a. SQUAT

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

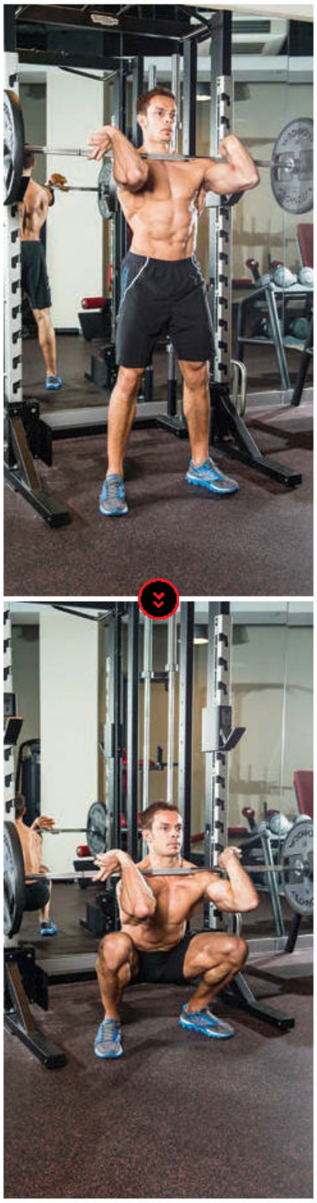
- Rest the bar on the back of your shoulders – not your neck – holding it with an overhand grip slightly wider than shoulder-width. Keep your elbows pointing down.
- Your feet should be placed slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, with your toes pointing outwards.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive back up powerfully through your heels.



1b. FRONT SQUAT

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

- Rest the bar on the front of your shoulders, holding it with your elbows pointing forwards and your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Maintain a natural arch in your back and keep your core braced throughout.
- Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.
- Drive powerfully back up through your heels.



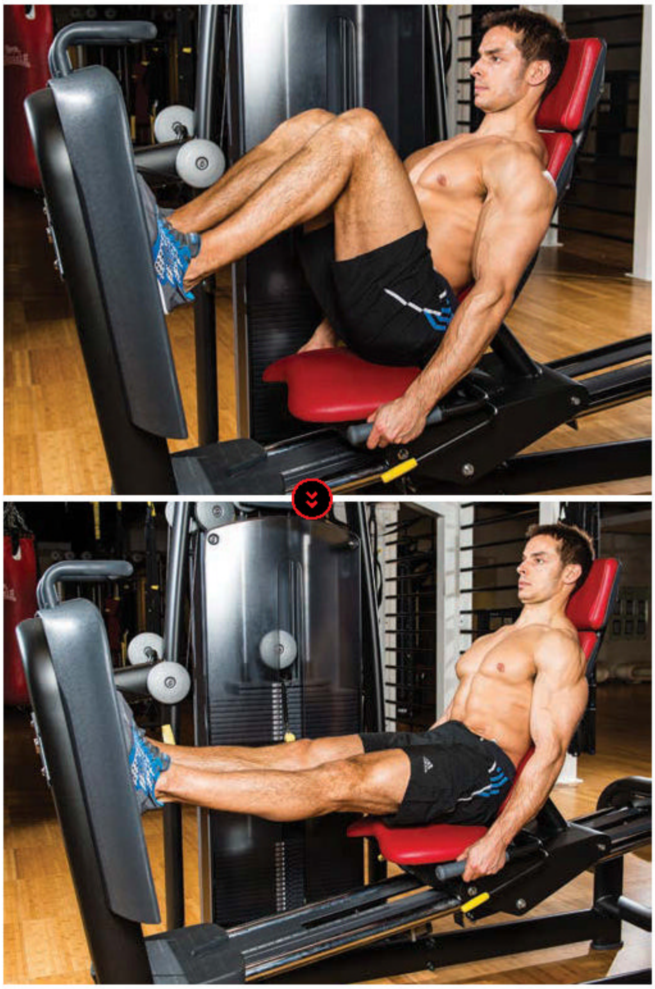
Warm up
with some empty-bar squats, gradually increasing the weight and decreasing the number of reps until you reach your work-set target weight.

Superset 2

2a. LEG PRESS

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 1030 / Rest 60 secs

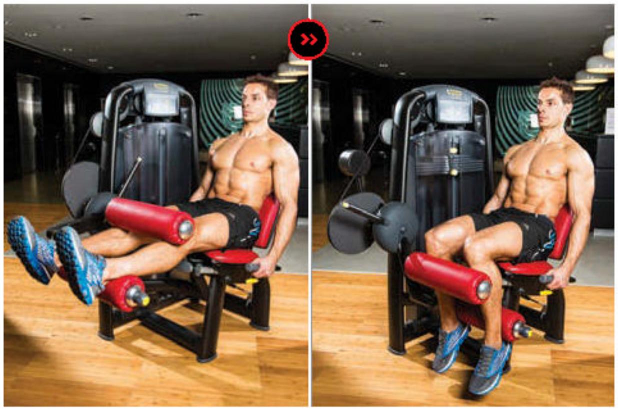
- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- Release the lock and push through your heels, to straighten your legs.
- Bend your legs to return slowly to the start.



2b. SEATED HAMSTRING CURL

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 1030 / Rest 60 secs

- Sit on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
- With the pad against the back of your lower calves, contract your hamstrings to lower it.
- Return slowly to the start.



MONTH 5 WORKOUT 3

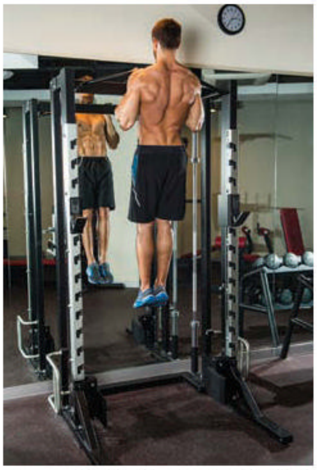
Back and biceps

Superset 1

1a. CHIN-UP

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

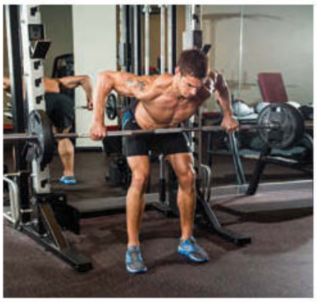
- Hold the bar with an underhand grip, with your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Start from a dead hang, with your arms fully extended.
- Squeeze your lats together to pull yourself up.
- Once your chin is higher than your hands, lower yourself slowly back to the start.



1b. BENT OVER ROW

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

- Start with your core braced, your back straight, your shoulder blades retracted and your knees bent slightly.
- Hold the bar with a shoulder-width grip and lean forwards from the hips.
- Pull it up to your lower sternum, then lower it to return to the start.



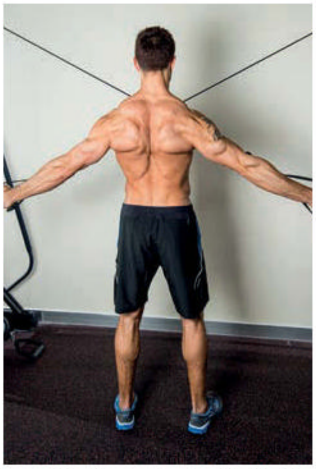
Warm up with some close-grip underhand lat pull-downs, gradually increasing the weight and decreasing the number of reps until you reach your work-set target weight.

Superset 2

2a. STANDING CABLE REVERSE FLYE

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

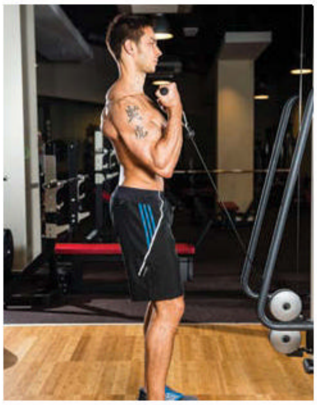
- Stand with your arms crossed, holding a D-handle attached to the machine's high pulley in each hand at shoulder height.
- Pull both handles across your body and down, until your arms are extended and your shoulder blades are retracted.
- Return slowly to the start.



2b. CABLE BICEPS CURL

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

- Stand up tall, holding a double-rope cable handle attached to the low pulley of a cable machine.
- Keeping your elbows close to your body, curl your arms up to raise the handles towards your chin.
- At the top of the move, squeeze your biceps and return to the start, squeezing your triceps at the bottom of the move.



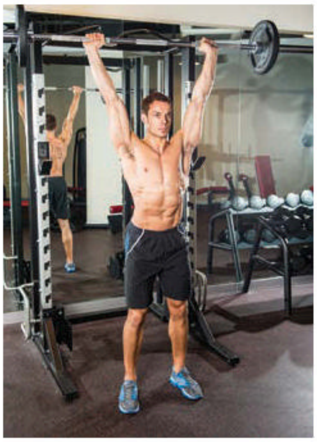
MONTH 5 WORKOUT 4

Shoulders

1a. PUSH PRESS

Sets 4 / Reps 8 / Tempo 3010 / Rest 60 secs

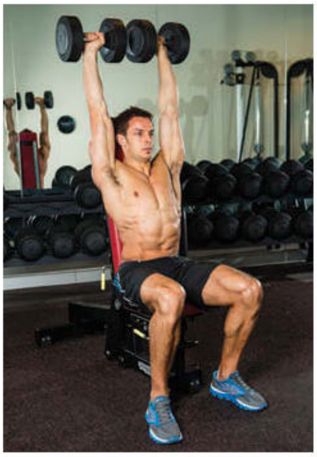
- With your feet placed shoulder-width apart, position a bar on your upper chest, with a grip slightly wider than shoulder width.
- Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.
- Bend at the knees and go into a quarter-squat, then stand up and press the bar directly upwards.
- Lower the bar back down to your chest.



1b. SEATED DUMBBELL ARNOLD PRESS

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

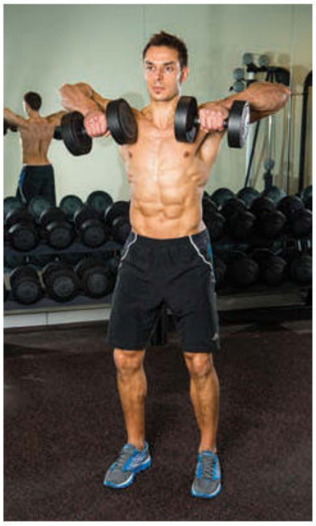
- Sit on an upright bench holding dumbbells with palms facing you, feet flat on the floor and core braced.
- Press the weights up, rotating your hands, so you end with your arms straight and your palms facing forwards.
- Reverse the move under control, to return to the start position.



2a. DUMBBELL UPRIGHT ROW

Sets 4 / Reps 10 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

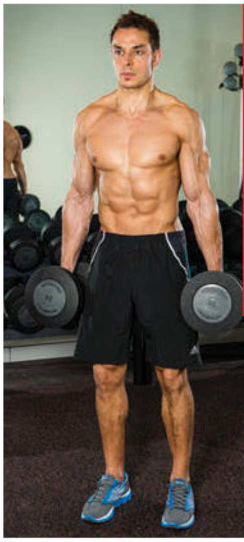
- Stand up tall, holding a dumbbell in each hand with an overhand grip.
- Leading with your elbows, pull the weights up until your hands are level with the top of your chest.
- Lower the weights back to the start.



2b. DUMBBELL SHRUG

Sets 4 / Reps 12 / Tempo 2010 / Rest 60 secs

- Stand tall, holding a dumbbell in each hand by your sides.
- Keeping your core braced, shrug your shoulders towards your ears, making sure you keep your arms straight.
- Lower the weights back to the start.

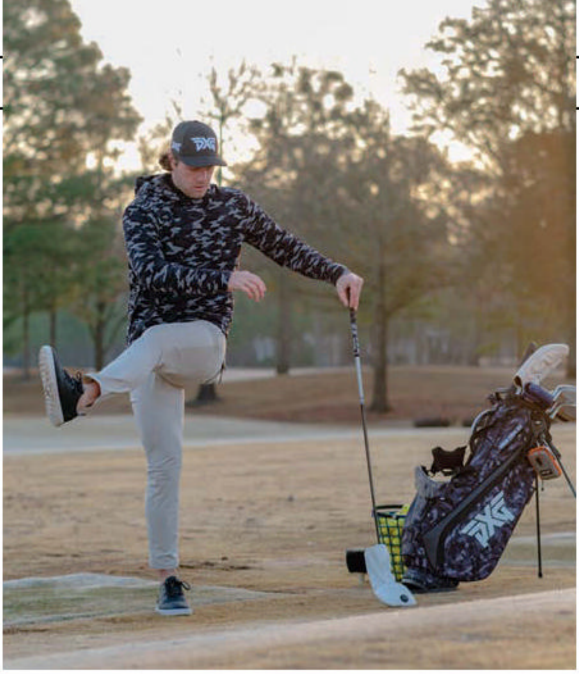


Warm up with some empty-bar shoulder presses, gradually increasing the weight and decreasing the number of reps until you reach your work-set target weight.

IN FULL SWING

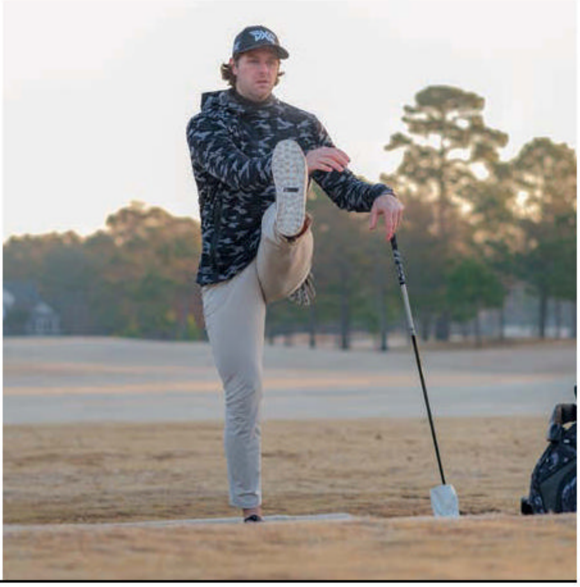
Stretches to level up your golf game

Mobility and recovery app pliability has launched its first sport-specific tailored mobility path for golf. Using corrective, passive, preventative and protective exercises, pliability's golf routines are designed to improve longevity in the game, while focusing on one of the most overlooked aspects of golf: mobility. Perform the following four movements before you tee off, or as standalone stretches on your recovery days.



MEET THE EXPERT

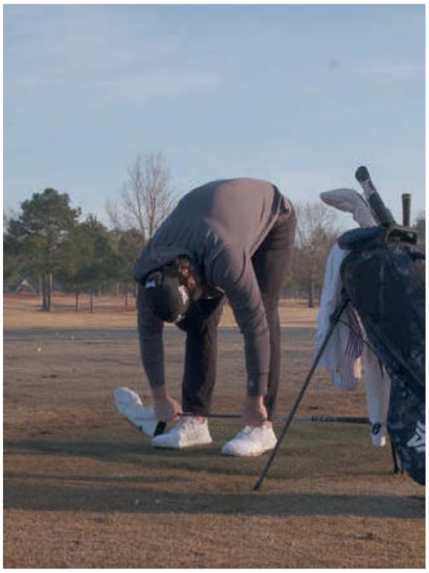
Blair Wheeler is pliability's golf partnerships manager. He's committed to sharing the importance of movement health for golfing performance.



1. SUPPORTED LEG SWINGS WITH GOLF CLUB

REPS: 5-7 each side
WHY: "This movement is one of my favourites," says Wheeler. "Utilising a driver or a long iron for support activates and warms up your legs, hips and glutes."

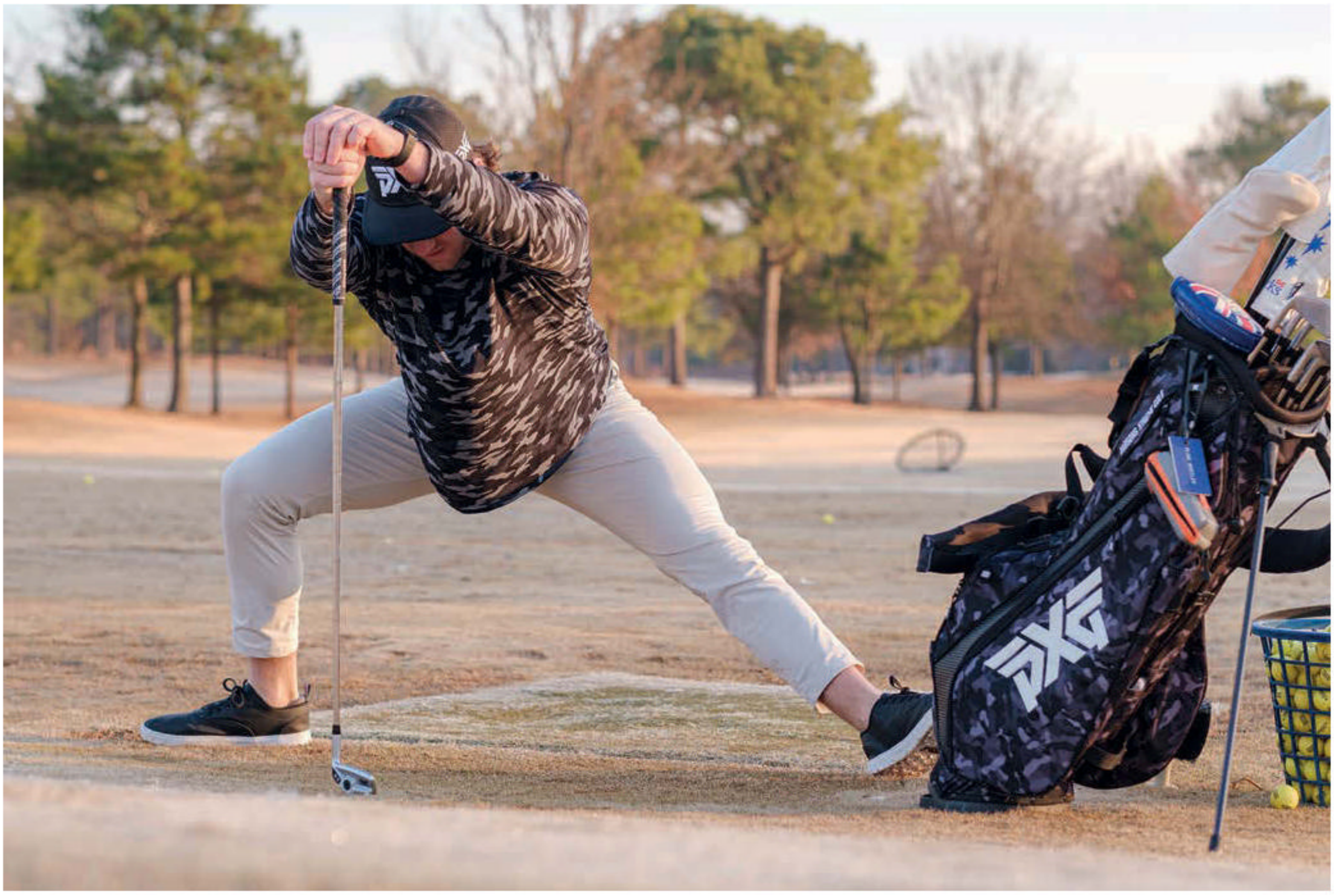
- Start with your golf club in your left hand, and swing your left leg forward and back, trying to keep the leg as straight as possible.
- Do this for 5-7 reps, then switch sides and repeat with your right.



2. JEFFERSON CURL WITH GOLF CLUB

REPS: 10-15 each side
WHY: "The most common problem area we see in golfers is the lower back. The Jefferson Curl with a golf club is a fantastic movement that targets this area."

- Bring your feet to hip-width position, holding your club with your hands shoulder-width apart.
- Begin to drop your chin to your chest, curling your cervical spine. Follow this curl, continuing to lower your head down your chest, eventually pulling your shoulders and chest down. Use the club weight to help you slowly get into this position.
- Continue to flex one segment at a time, through your mid-back down to your lower back, eventually flexing at your hips.
- When you reach your hips, push them back slightly while maintaining straight legs. This allows your chest to continue to fold forward.
- Take a deep breath to stretch into the bottom position. Squeeze your glutes, and abdominals, then reverse the process, making sure to 'uncurl' from the bottom up.
- Once at the top, take a deep breath, then repeat.
- You should feel your abdominals activating throughout this movement, to help support your lower back. If you feel pain at any point, back off the range of motion and do not push into the end ranges.
- Repeat this movement for 10-15 reps.

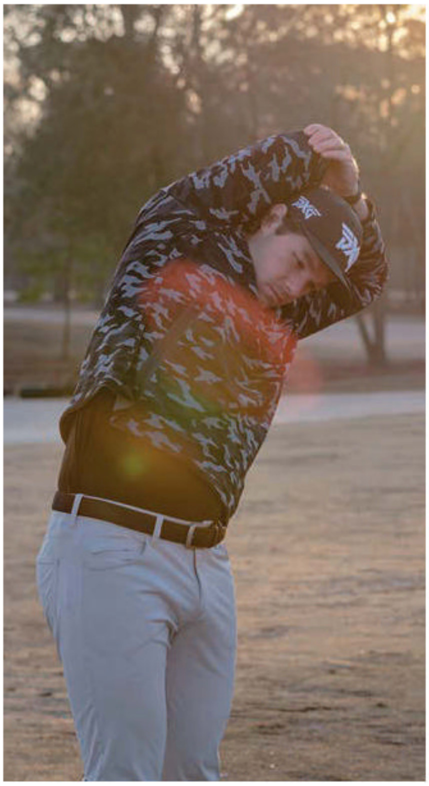


3. SUPPORTED COSSACK WITH WINDSHIELD WIPER

HOLD: 30 secs each side
WHY: "For anyone who works at a desk or sits for long periods of time, the hips and glutes will be thankful for this movement before playing golf."

- Take your golf club and hold it on the ground in front of you.
- Spring your feet wide – wider than shoulder-width.
- Sink your weight onto your right leg, trying to keep your right heel on the ground. Move slowly through this motion.
- Allow your left toe to come up and point towards the sky. Try to sit as far back and down as possible with each rep.
- Flex your left toe down towards the ground. Hold this while flexing your toe for 30 seconds. Use your club as balance support in this position if needed.
- Come back to a standing position, then switch sides.

Photography: pliability



4. STANDING HALF MOON WITH ACTIVE TRICEPS STRETCH

HOLD: 30 secs each side
WHY: "This movement is one that targets your upper back, obliques, shoulders and triceps."

- Reach your right hand up towards the sky.
- Bend your right elbow, reaching your hand down your upper back, with your palm facing your back.
- Reach your left hand behind you and try to touch the fingers on your right hand. Alternatively, use your left hand to press gently down on your right elbow, to increase the stretch.
- Hold this position for 30 seconds.
- Switch arms and repeat.

The pliability app is available to download on iOS, Android and any web browser. All users get a seven-day free trial, before a flat rate of £16.95 per month or £169.95 annually. Visit **pliability.com**

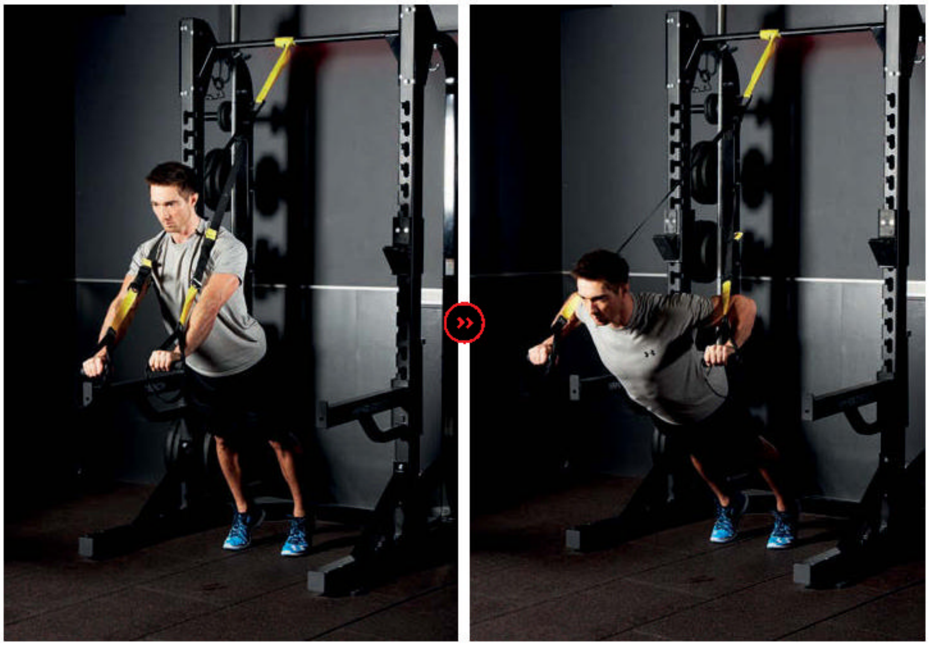
SUSPEND BELIEF

Close out your next upper body workout with this chest and back blast

Four minutes is all this finisher superset takes, but in that time you'll squeeze maximum muscle gains from your upper body session. The Tabata format is simple: perform the first exercise continuously at maximum intensity for 20 seconds, then rest for 10 seconds. Next, perform the second exercise at maximum intensity continuously for 20 seconds and rest for another 10. Do the whole thing 4 times to complete the workout – and leave the gym feeling fully

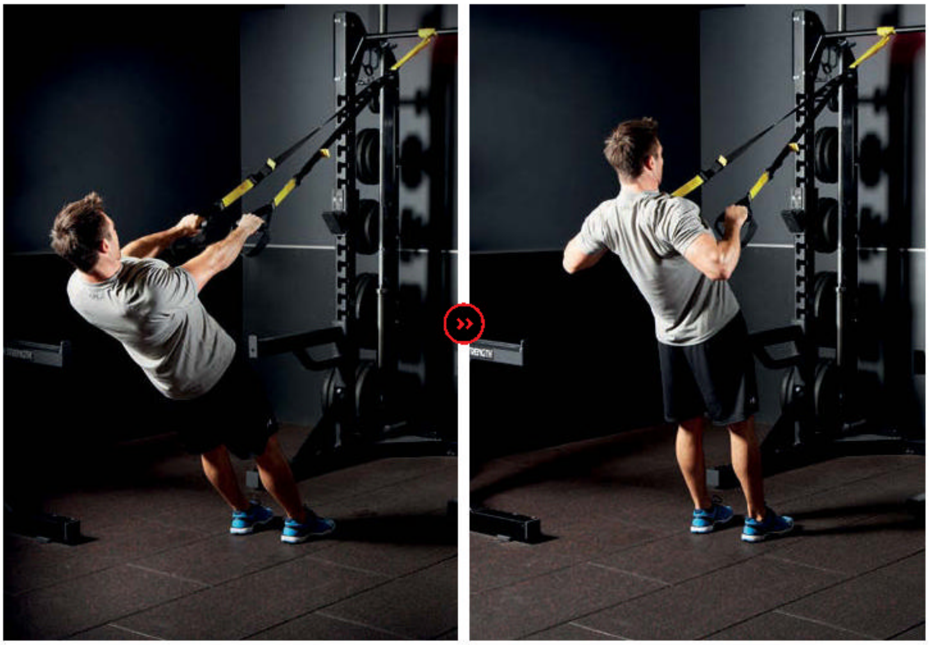
1a. TRX CHEST PRESS

- Assume an incline stance with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Lower your chest towards your hands, keeping your entire body as straight as possible – similar to a press-up – then return to the start.



1b. TRX INVERTED ROW

- Hold the handles and hang so your body forms a straight line, with your heels on the floor and your core braced.
- Squeeze your shoulder blades together and pull yourself up, drawing your hands towards your armpits.
- Pause, then lower.



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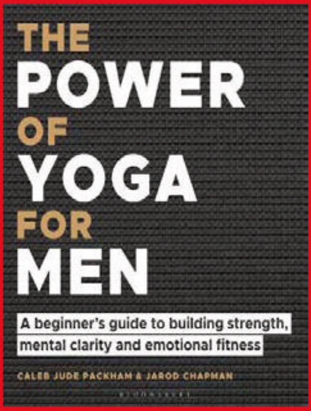
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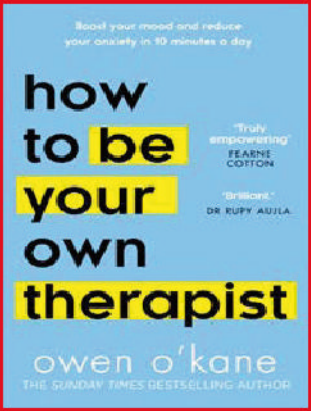
A beginner's guide to building strength, mental clarity and emotional fitness
CALEB JUDE PACKHAM & JAROD CHAPMAN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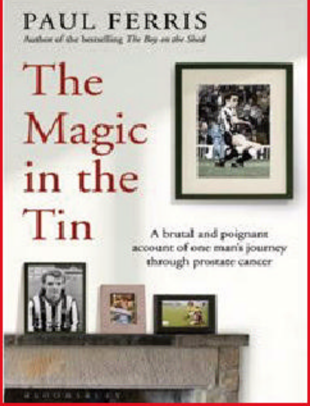
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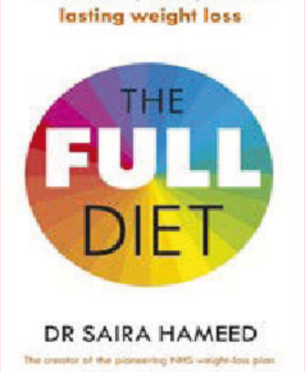
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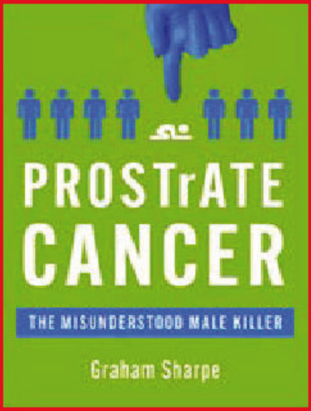
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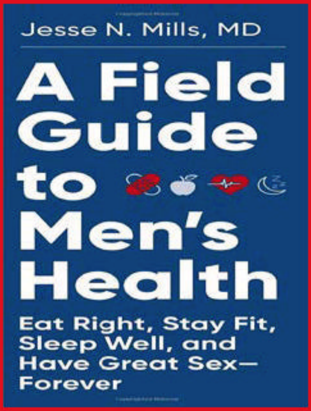
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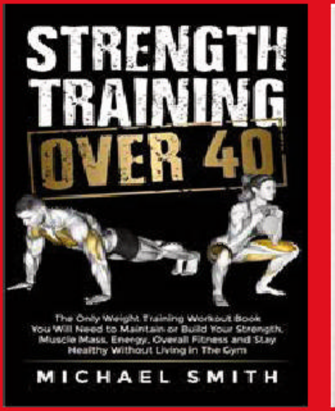
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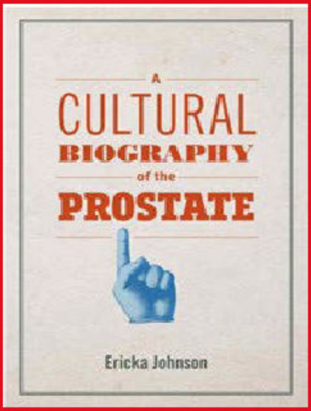
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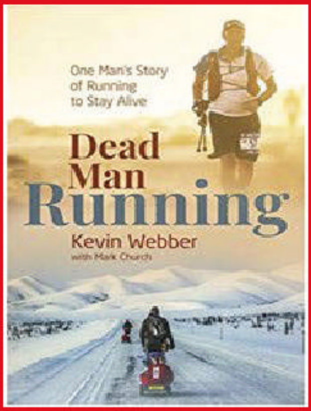
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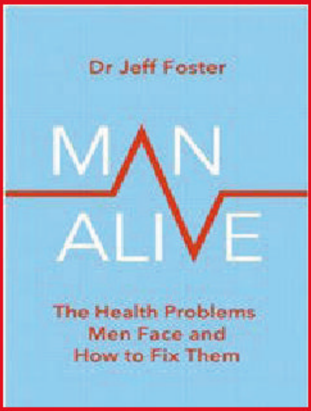
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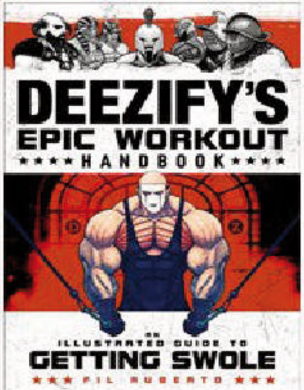
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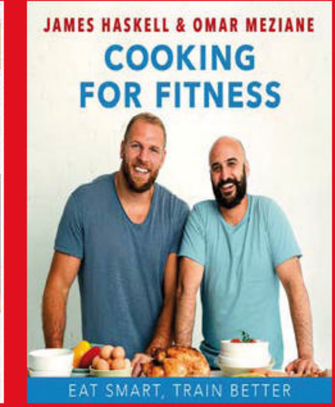
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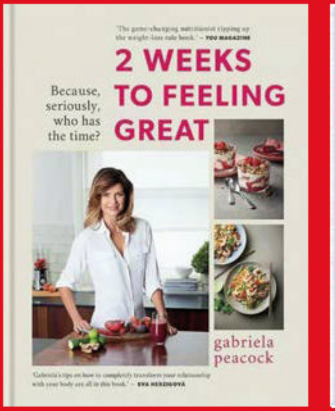
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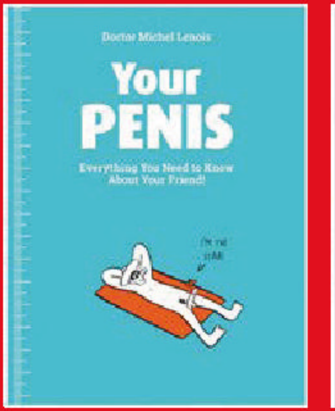
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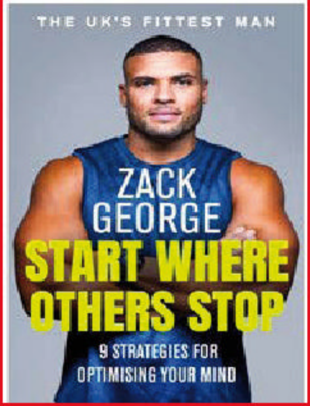
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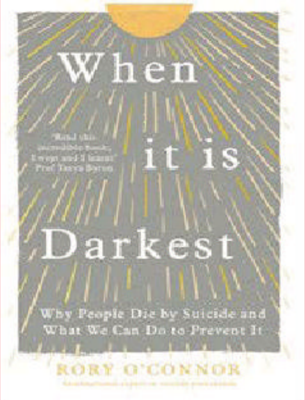
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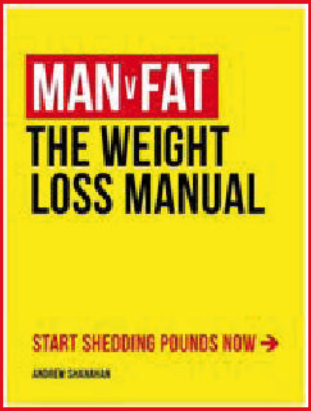
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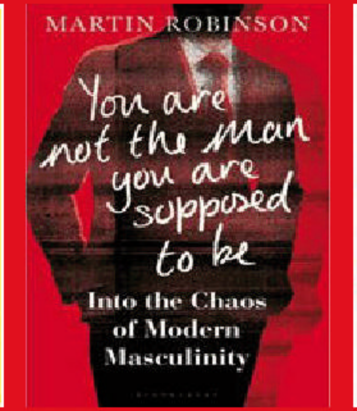
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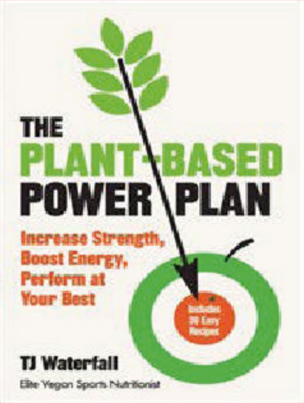
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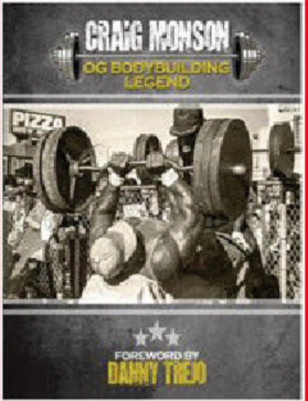
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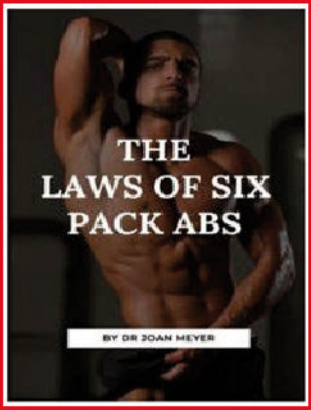
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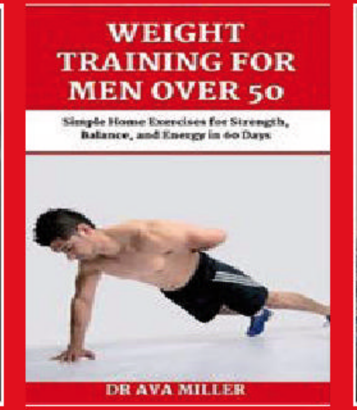
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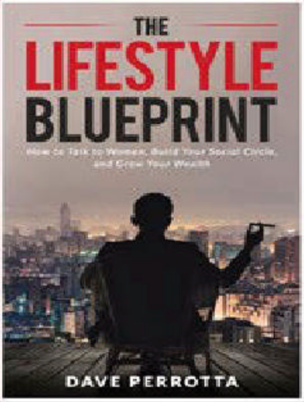
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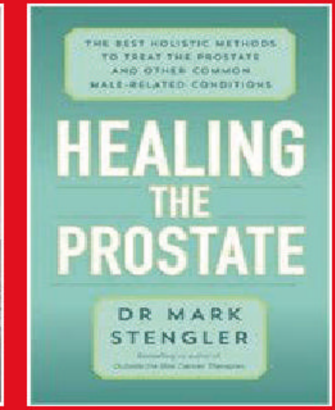
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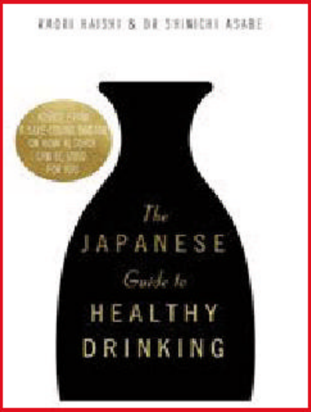
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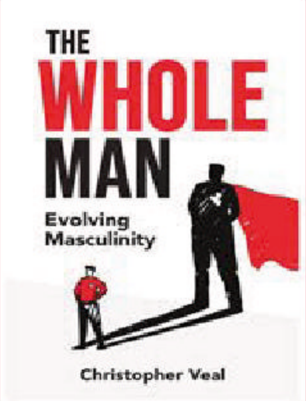
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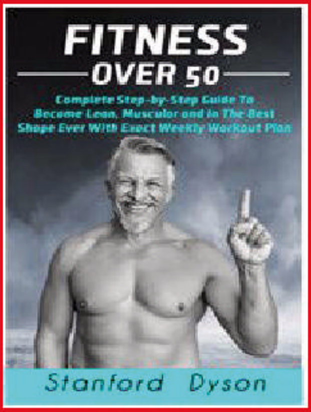
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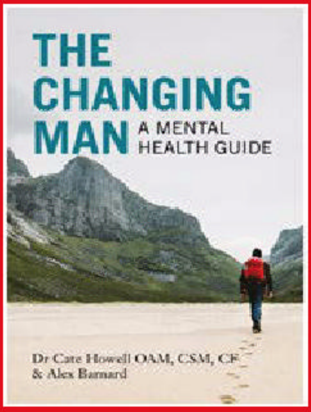
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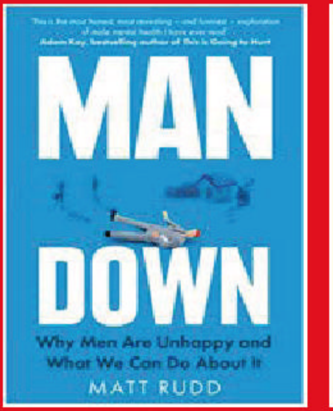
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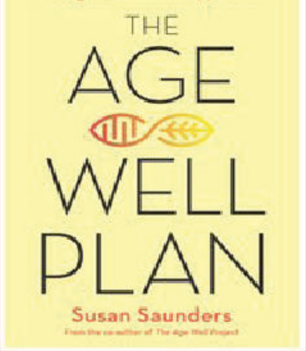
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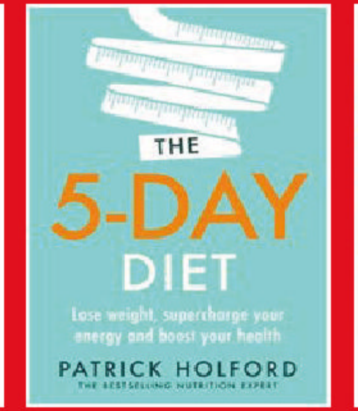
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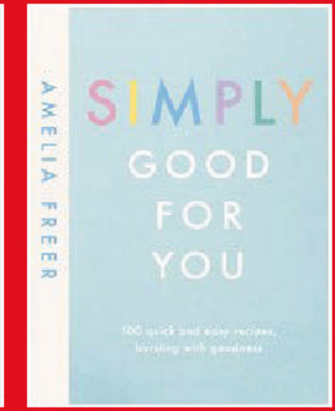
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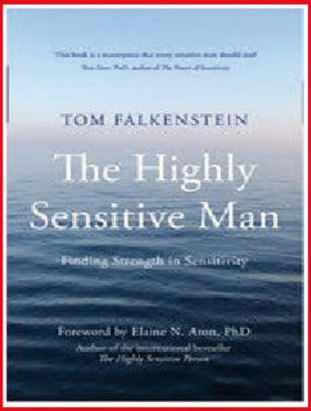
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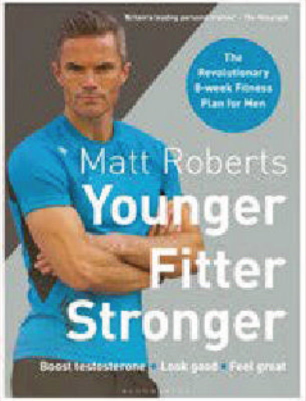
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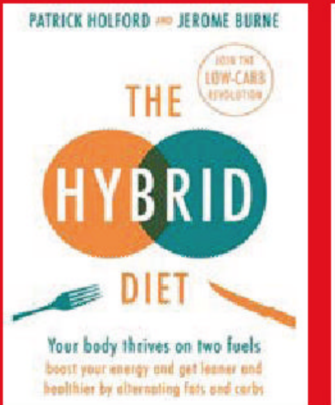
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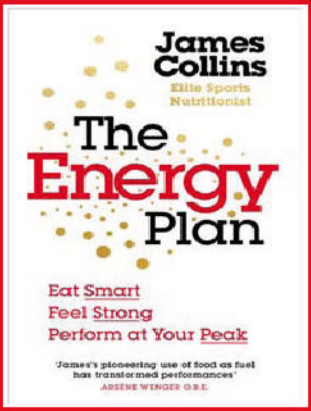
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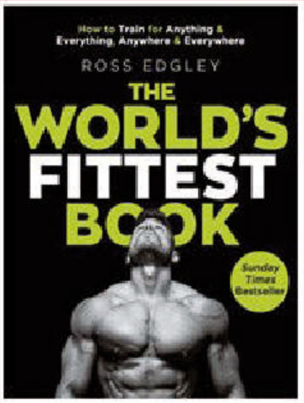
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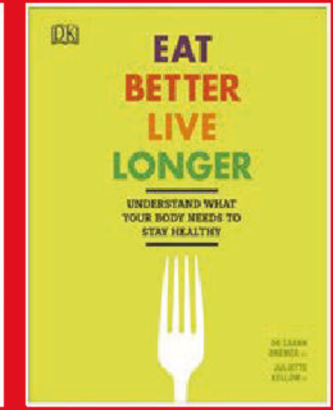
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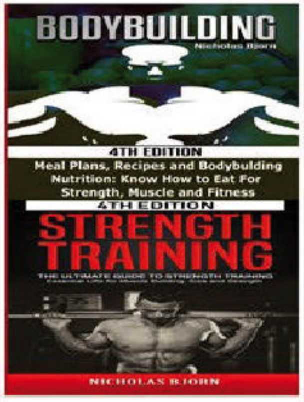
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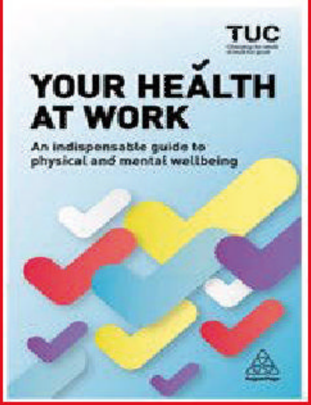
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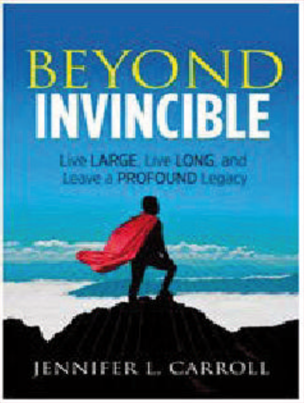
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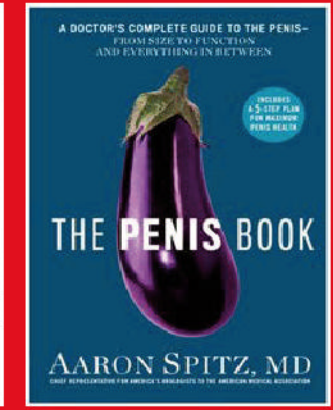
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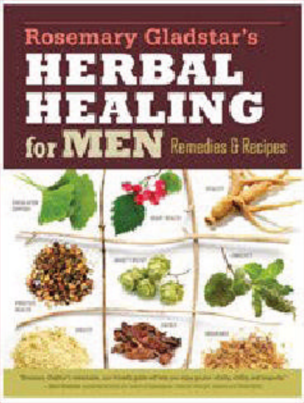
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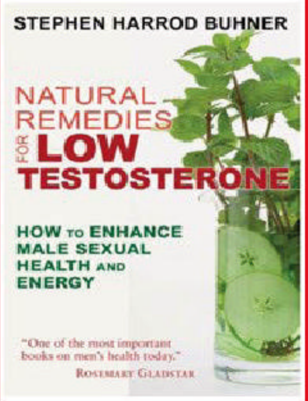
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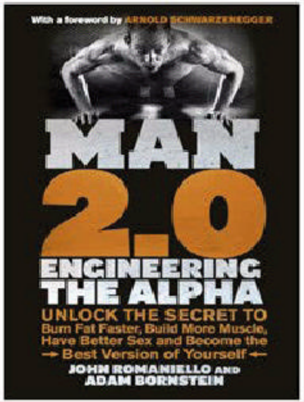
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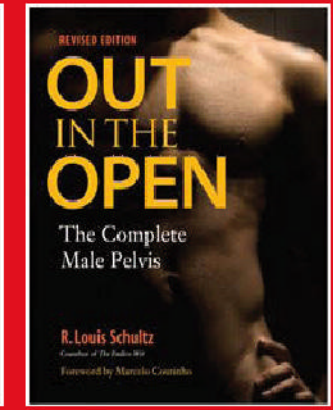
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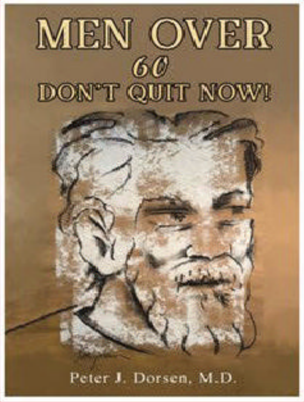
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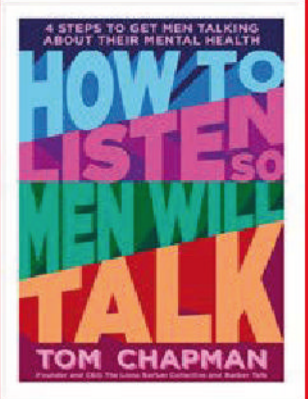
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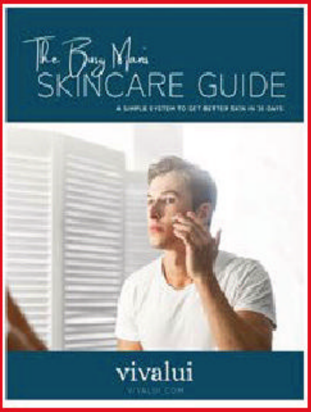
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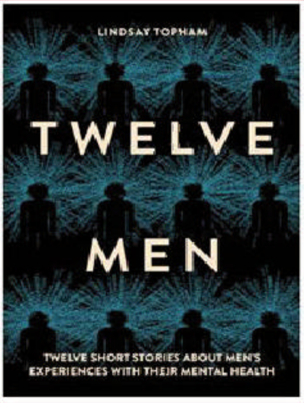
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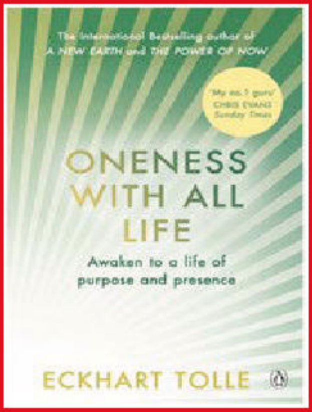
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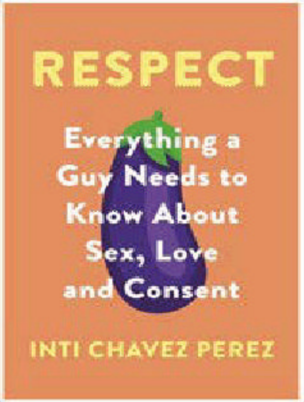
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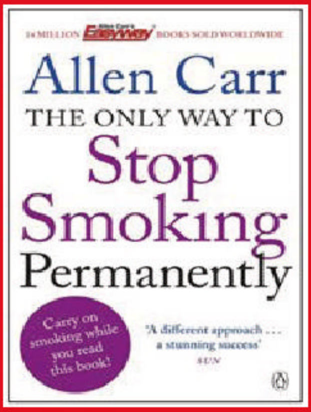
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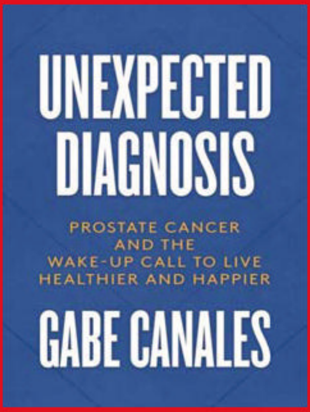
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